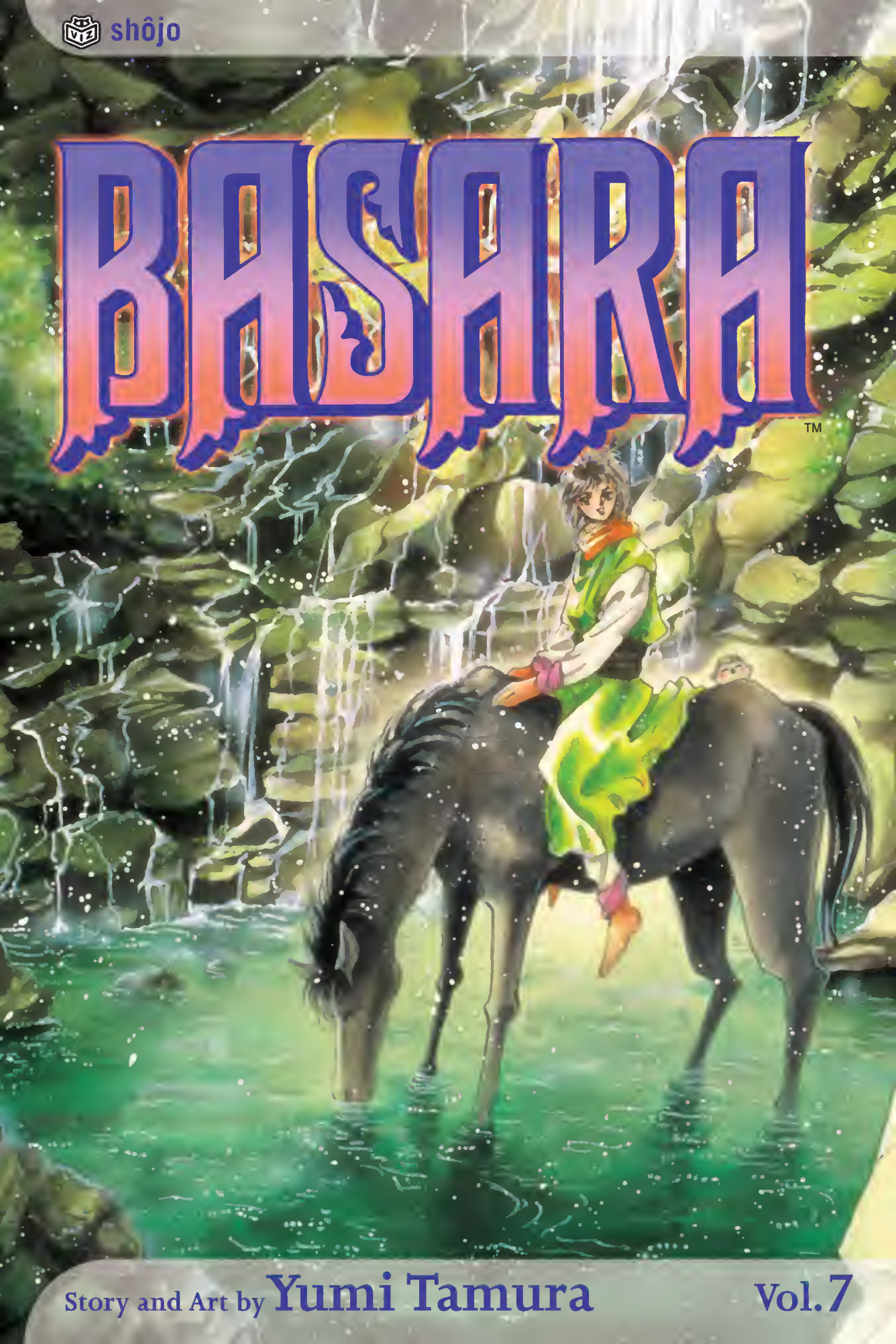
shôjo
BASARA™
Story and Art by Yumi Tamura
Vol. 7

shôjo

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Yumi Tamura

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Gerard Jones

Translation/Lillian Olsen
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Cover Design/ Yuki Ameda
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Managing Editor/Annette Roman
Editor in Chief/Alvin Lu
Production Manager/Noboru Watanabe
Sr. Director of Licensing and Acquisitions/Rika Inouye
Vice President of Marketing/Liza Coppola
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STORY THUS FAR

In the early 21st century, an apocalypse turned fertile lands into deserts and brought human civilization to its knees. Control of Japan passed into the hands of tyrannical kings. 300 years later, a new hope was born.

At the birth of a rebel chieftain's twins, the blind prophet Nagi predicted, "This is a child of destiny, one who will grow to lead the people and be the light in the sky of our nation's future." The people of Byakko Village placed their hopes in Tatara, their Chief's son, raising him as the "Boy of Destiny."

With the tyrannical Ukon XV ruling Japan through his ruthless sons, a better tomorrow can only be achieved through strife and bloodshed. When the "Boy of Destiny" is killed by the Red King's forces, it is up to his twin sister Sarasa to lead their people in his name, or all will be lost.

After an impossible victory over the Red King in Kyushu, Sarasa's journey to Kanto has proved equally fortunate, ending in the death of the Blue King and the liberation of his oppressed people. Still, Sarasa was separated from Shuri and failed to retrieve the Byakko sword from him. In the meantime, "Tatara's" newest ally, Raizo, has lent "him" his clan's sacred sword, Seiryu.

Through treachery, Asagi has been manipulating his way on to "Tatara's" side, for this former Blue King Captain has a great deal of useful information. With the aid of his spies, Asagi has learned that the Red King's General Kazan is holding Tatara's mother captive. With this knowledge he has turned "Tatara" aside from plans of heading north to gain more allies. Worse, he has learned "Tatara" is not only a girl but also unknowingly in love with the Red King!

Like an actor on a stage, Asagi has played those around him. Now, "Tatara" journeys to Kumano, for Kazan is representing the Red King at the Blue King's funeral in this spiritually significant section of Japan. Having kept her capture secret from the Red King, Kazan has brought Tatara's mother along for the trip...

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MOM-- WAIT FOR ME!

I'LL SAVE YOU!

I PROMISE I'LL DEFEAT GENERAL KAZAN.

BA-
AZURE TALE 5:
THE LAND OF TREES
FOOM

WAAAA!

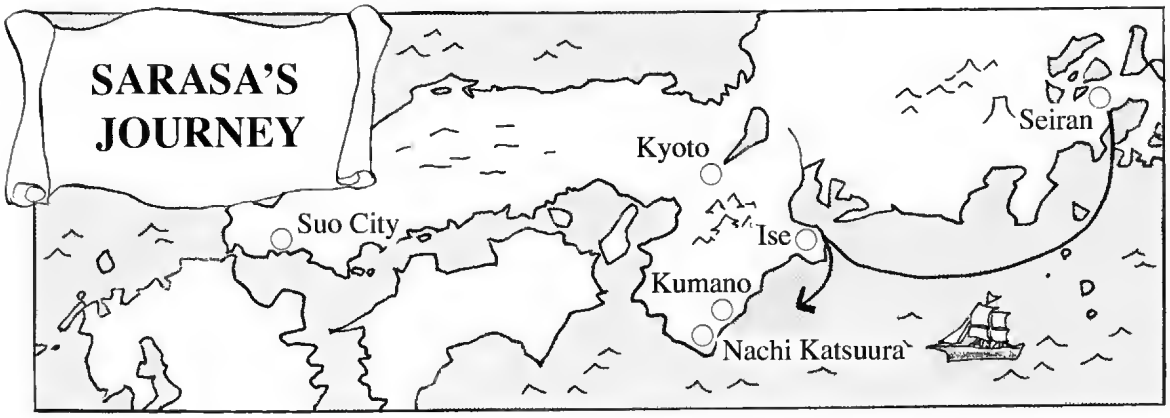
TINY TAM-TAM TIME ①

CONSIDERING THE TIME THIS IS PUBLISHED—HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Hello!
Thanks for all your letters!
Have you gotten my answers?
A lot of you forget to write your names and addresses (seriously), so if you haven't gotten a response, try again! ♡

I used a green cover again, so I'm sorry if you mistook it for vol. ⑤.
But water was the theme for this one.
(Though I don't have a theme all the time...)
So here we have vol. ⑦! ♡Enjoy! ♡

TAMU



THIS ONE'S MINE!
BA-FOOOOM
IT'S A WHALE!
HE'S GOING AFTER A WHALE!
WHAT!?
WAAH!
SO THAT IS A WHALE?
THAT WHALE'S HUGE!
HE'S HUNTING IT...
IN THAT LITTLE BOAT?
WITH THAT LITTLE HARPOON!?
NO WAY!
WA-HOO!

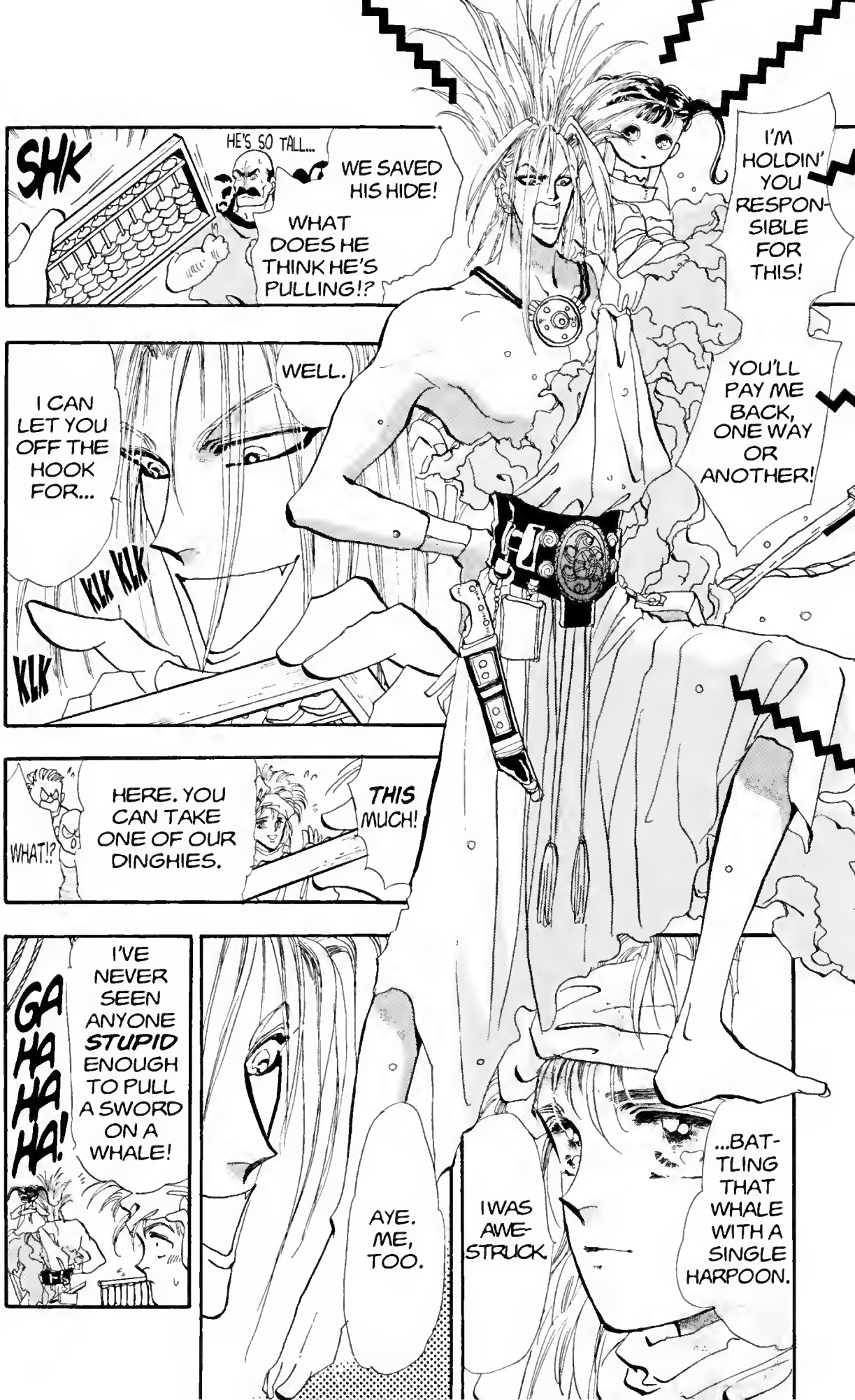
TODAY'S THE DAY YOU'RE REBORN AS SASHIMI!
YOU WON'T LOSE ME THIS TIME, FISHIE!
HAAH!
GA
DM
DM
WOK
DM
DM
WAA-AAH!
HOO-
DM

AUGH!
WW
CURSE YOU, FISH!
WWW
BA
M
EEE!
BYOK
YOUNG MASTER!

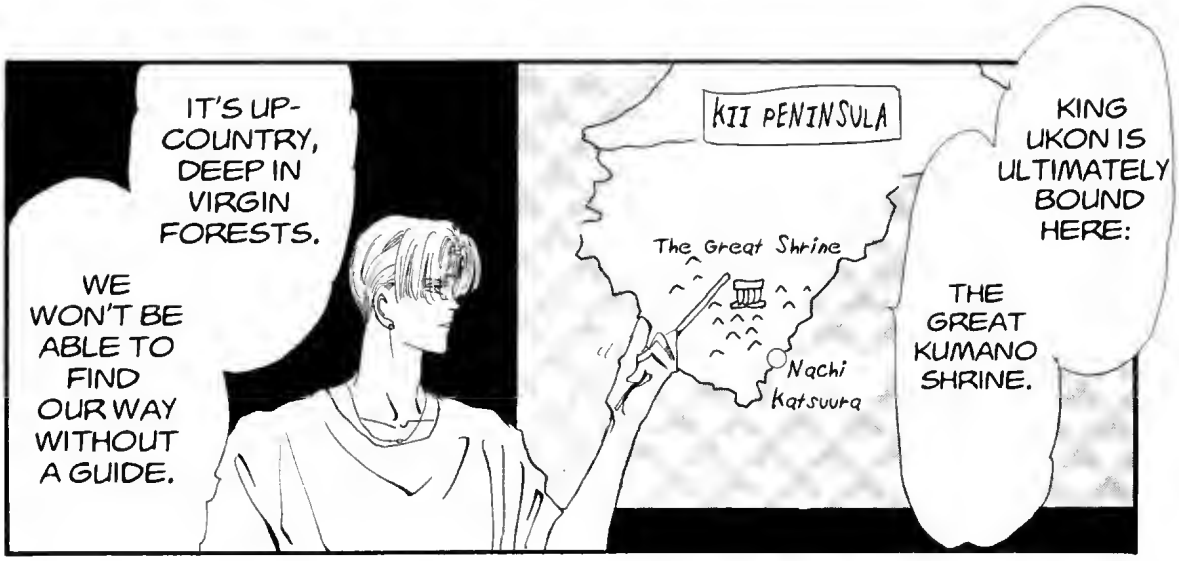
YOUNG MAS-TER!
PLASH
DAMN 'EM ALL!
ARE YOU HURT, MIKI!?
OH!
SNAP
KRAK
LAUNCH THE LIFE-BOATS!
ZSSH
GRAB AHOLD!
WOOOO
CHK

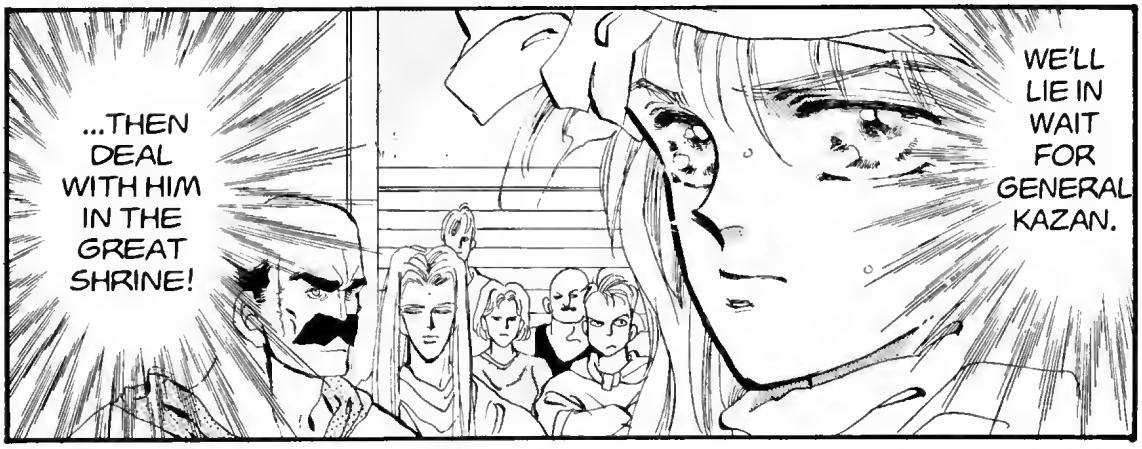
IT'S SO... HUGE.

ZLSH
ZSH
ZSH
AND ALL BECAUSE *YOUR* DAMN TUB WAS LOITERIN' IN MY WAY!
NOW HE'S UP AND GONE AGAIN!
I'VE BEEN CHASIN' THAT WHALE SINCE I WAS A LITTLE FRY!
YOU LISTEN TO ME--


SHK
HE'S SO TALL...
WE SAVED HIS HIDE!
WHAT DOES HE THINK HE'S PULLING!?
I'M HOLDIN' YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS!
WELL.
I CAN LET YOU OFF THE HOOK FOR...
KLK KLK
KLK
YOU'LL PAY ME BACK, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER!
WHAT!?
HERE. YOU CAN TAKE ONE OF OUR DINGHIES.
THIS MUCH!
GA HA HA HA!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE STUPID ENOUGH TO PULL A SWORD ON A WHALE!
AYE. ME, TOO.
I WAS AWE-STRUCK.
...BATTLING THAT WHALE WITH A SINGLE HARPOON.

ZSH ZSH
THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS IN THIS WORLD I DON'T KNOW ABOUT.
IT WAS SO HUGE. I WAS FROZEN TO THE SPOT...
THIS REGION HAS A LONG TRADITION OF WHALING.
BZZ BZZ BZZ
THAT SCARED ME!
SEEMS SOMEONE'S KEEPING IT ALIVE.
THAT MAN...
HE FACED DOWN A GIANT WHALE ALONE, WITH ONE HARPOON.
BUT IF I THINK ABOUT IT... THAT'S WHAT WE'RE DOING.


IT'S UP-COUNTRY, DEEP IN VIRGIN FORESTS.
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND OUR WAY WITHOUT A GUIDE.
KII PENINSULA
The Great Shrine
Nachi Katsuura
KING UKON IS ULTIMATELY BOUND HERE:
THE GREAT KUMANO SHRINE.

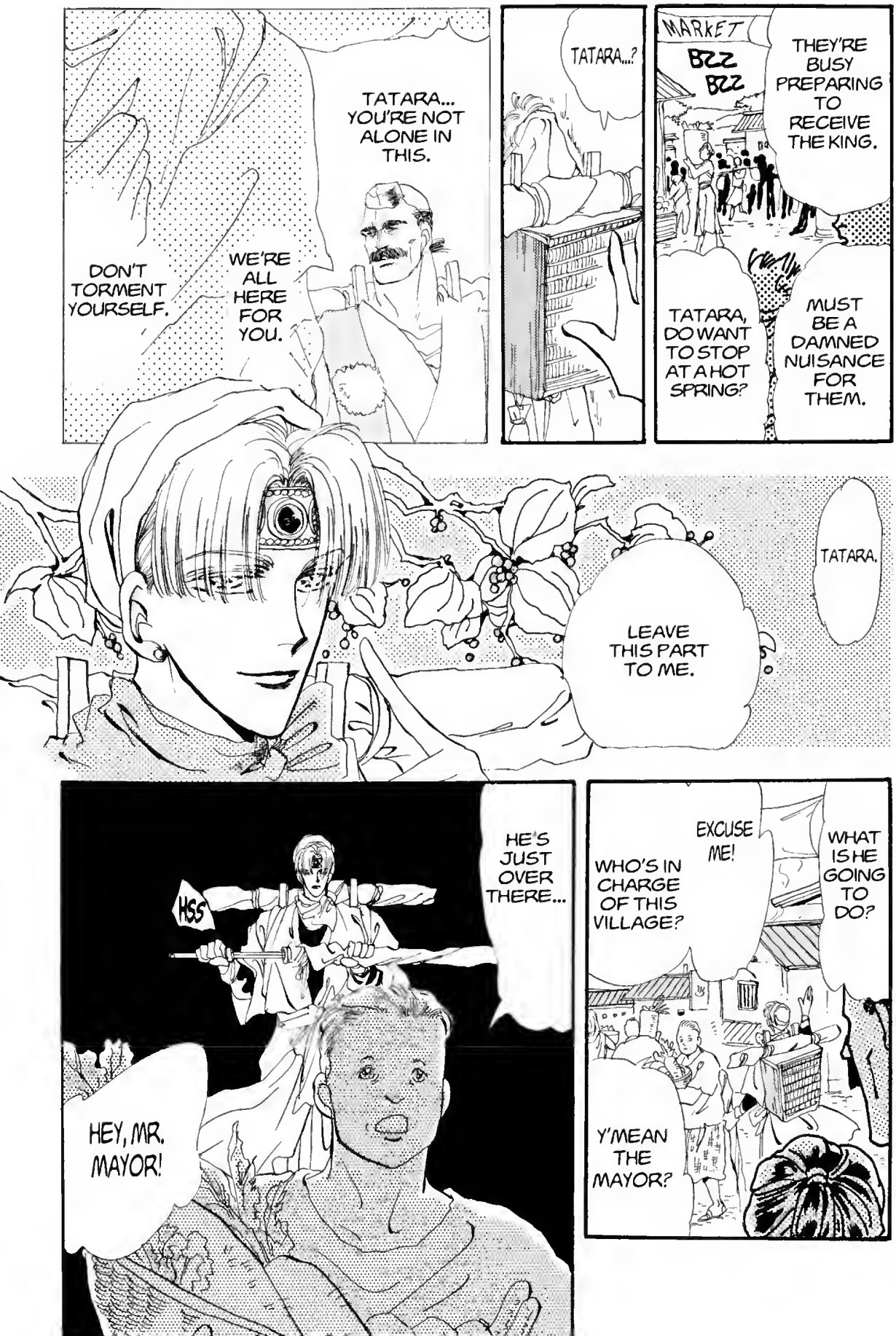

...THEN DEAL WITH HIM IN THE GREAT SHRINE!
WE'LL LIE IN WAIT FOR GENERAL KAZAN.

TOSHI.
SHOTA.
YEAH!
GOT IT!
ME AND KAKU...
WE'LL FORM AN ADVANCE TEAM.
WE'LL DISEMBARK IN NACHI KATSUURA.
SECRETLY.
I WISH I COULD BE-LIEVE--
QUIET!
ME, TOO.
OF COURSE.
HISHA AND...
KING UKON ALWAYS HIRES GUIDES THERE, TOO.

NACHI KATSUURA

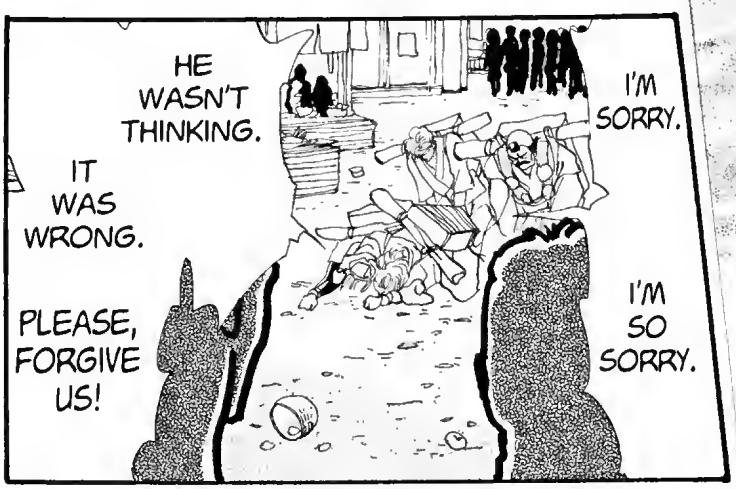
A RUSTIC HOT SPRINGS TOWN.

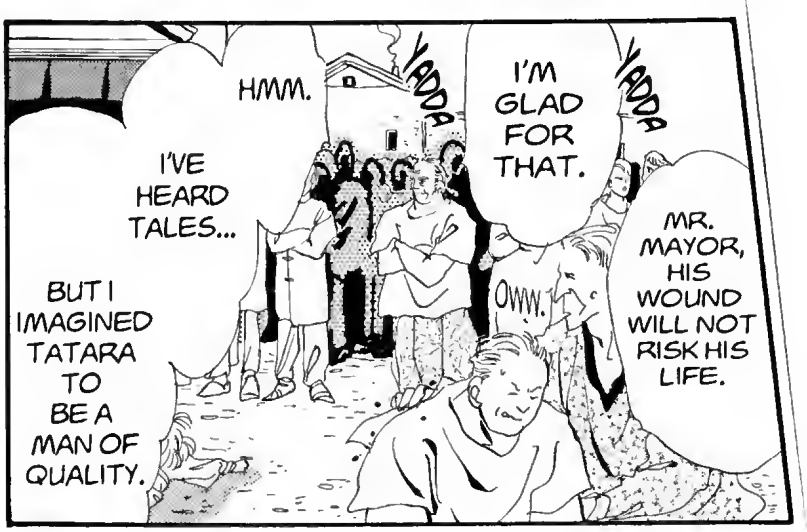
THE GATEWAY TO THE GREAT SHRINE.


TATARA... YOU'RE NOT ALONE IN THIS.
DON'T TORMENT YOURSELF.
WE'RE ALL HERE FOR YOU.
TATARA...?
MARKET
BZZ BZZ
THEY'RE BUSY PREPARING TO RECEIVE THE KING.
TATARA, DO WANT TO STOP AT A HOT SPRING?
MUST BE A DAMNED NUISANCE FOR THEM.
TATARA.
LEAVE THIS PART TO ME.
HSS
HE'S JUST OVER THERE...
HEY, MR. MAYOR!
EXCUSE ME!
WHO'S IN CHARGE OF THIS VILLAGE?
WHAT IS HE GOING TO DO?
Y'MEAN THE MAYOR?

GAAH!
ASAGI!?
HEAR ME!
YOU WILL DO AS WE SAY--
OR WE WILL SLICE OFF THE MAYOR'S HEAD AND KILL YOU ALL!
WE ARE THE ARMY OF TATARA!

ASAGI!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING!?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WE DON'T HAVE TO GO ALL THE WAY TO THE SHRINE.
WE KNOW KING UKON AND HIS PARTY WILL BE STOPPING HERE.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS TAKE THE VILLAGERS' PLACES
BA
DAMN IT, ASAGI!
WHAT ARE YOU SO ANGRY ABOUT?
I'M NOT THE BLUE KING!
I DON'T DO THINGS THIS WAY!
HEH
I DON'T DO THINGS THIS WAY!
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE FOOLING?





WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

TO DEFEAT THE RED KING WITH *SENTIMENTALITY*?

MOST DISAP-POINTING.

YOU MAY AS WELL BE A GANG OF BANDITS.

WE WON'T CAUSE ANYONE ANY TROUBLE!

WAIT!

JUST TELL US THE WAY TO THE SHRINE!

YAA YAA YAA

BNK

GET OUT.

SHUK

TAK

BNK

YOU'RE NOT WELCOME HERE!

GO AWAY.

NO?

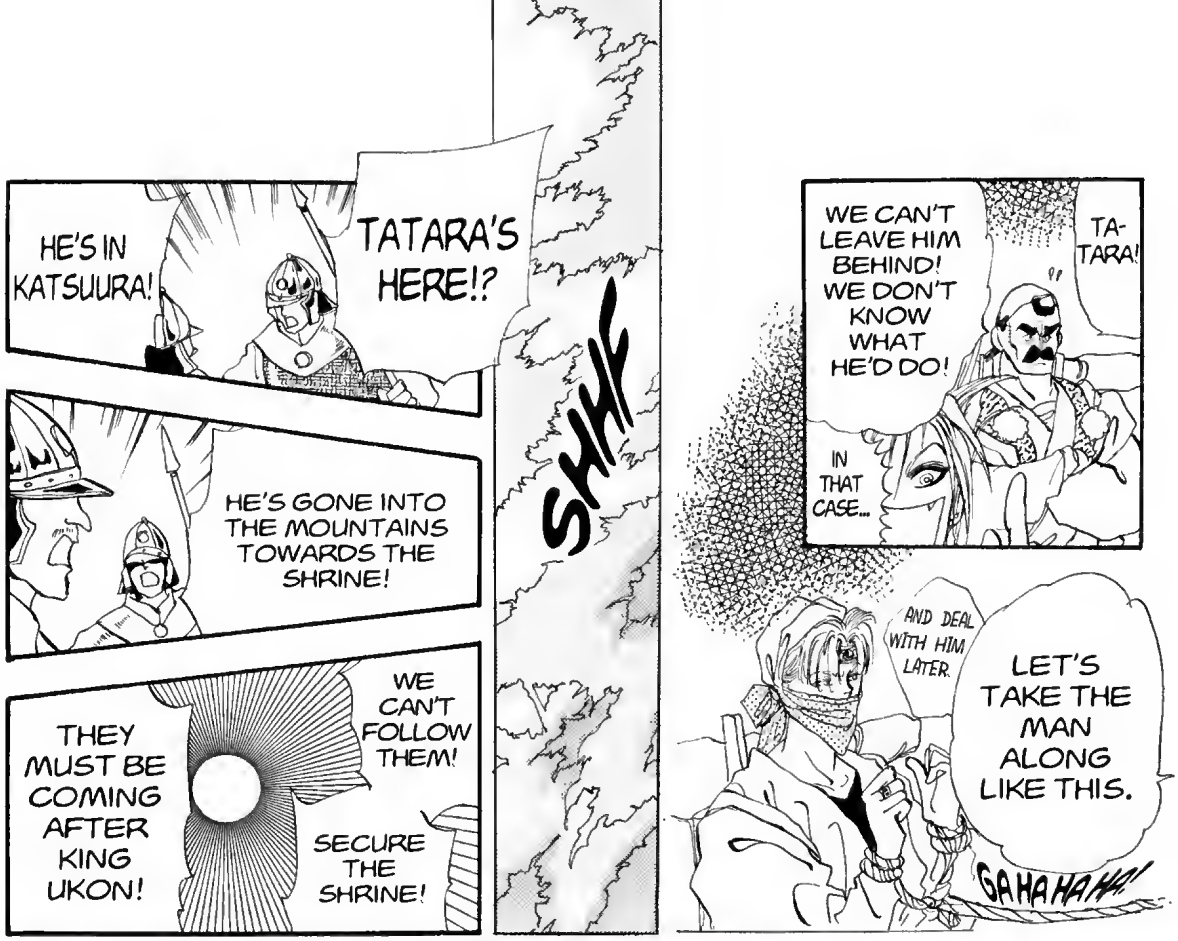
THEN HOW ABOUT... *MONEY?*

TUG

WE PEOPLE OF KUMANO DON'T SUBMIT TO FORCE.

YOU WON'T FIND ANYONE TO HELP YOU NOW.

YOUNG MASTER!
THE YOUNG MASTER FROM HONGU!
I'LL GUIDE 'EM...
IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT.
ARE YOU SURE THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT?
HEH.
DEAR LITTLE SARASA.
I'M SORRY, TATARA.
I WON'T DO IT AGAIN.
I THOUGHT IT WAS THE BEST STRATEGY.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO CRY, LAD!
ASAGI!
WHY CAN'T YOU JUST LEAVE!?
WHAT DO YOU SAY?
HEH
WE'VE CALLED THE POLICE.
DON'T GET INVOLVED, M'LAD.
WE HAVE TO GET THERE
...AT ALL COSTS.
P-PLEASE.
I BEG YOU.
WE HAVE TO...
MOM!



PUT THE WHOLE MOUNTAIN ON AN EMERGENCY ALERT!

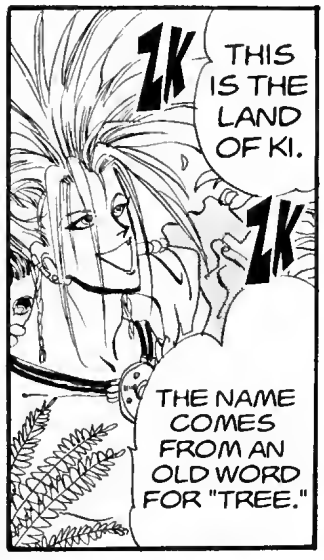
ZK

ZK

ALL CEDAR, I'D SAY...
WEEZ
WEEZ
LOOK AT ALL THESE TREES! CAN'T EVEN SEE THE SKY.
HFF
GOOD THING WE DIDN'T BRING MASTER NAGI.

DON'T BE A FOOL.
THEY'LL COME UP A REAL PATH.
SNAP SNAP
THIS IS THE SHORT-CUT. TOP SECRET, Y'KNOW.

KING UKON...
ACK!
SPIDER WEBS!
YICK!
WILL REALLY COME UP THIS PATH!?


ZK
THIS IS THE LAND OF KI.
ZK
THE NAME COMES FROM AN OLD WORD FOR "TREE."

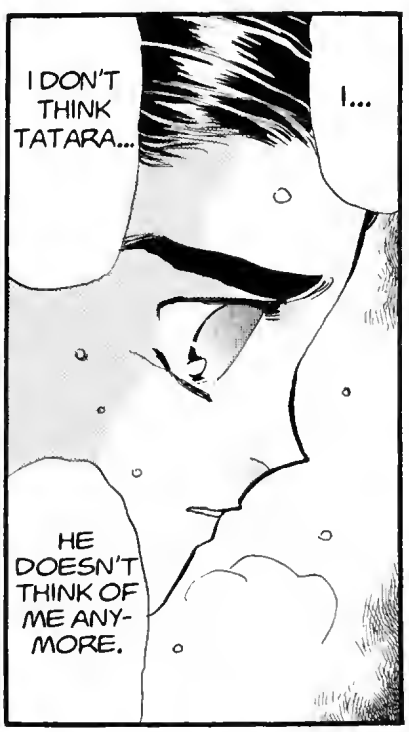
THIS IS NOTHING.
AND MIGHTY TOUGH GOING.
JUST DON'T SPEND YOURSELF AT THE START, LAD.
I'M FINE.
YOU'LL NEED SOME STONE IN YOUR BELLY.

OOH!
NEED A BREAK, DO YOU?
NO!
I CAN KEEP GOING!
HFF

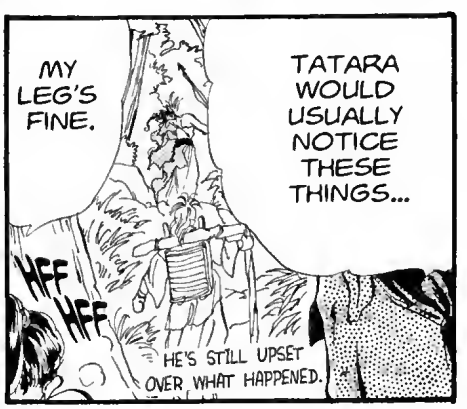
HFF ZHEE WEEEZ
.....

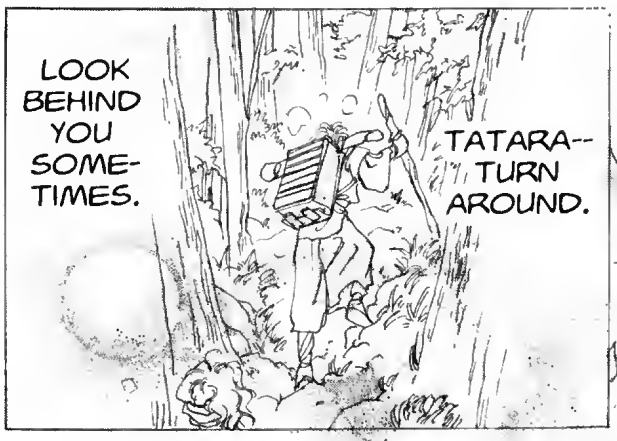
THIS IS NOTHING.
NOTHING IS TOO MUCH UNTIL I SEE MOM!
NOTHING...

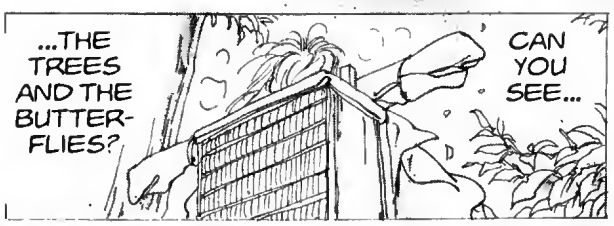
HAYATO...
IT'S MY FAULT.
IT'S BECAUSE I'VE BEEN POUTING.


I DON'T THINK TATARA...
I...
HE DOESN'T THINK OF ME ANY-MORE.

HAYATO, HOW'S YOUR LEG HOLDING UP?
YOU JUST TOOK OFF YOUR CAST. THIS MUST BE ROUGH ON YOU.


MY LEG'S FINE.
TATARA WOULD USUALLY NOTICE THESE THINGS...
HFF HFF
HE'S STILL UPSET OVER WHAT HAPPENED.

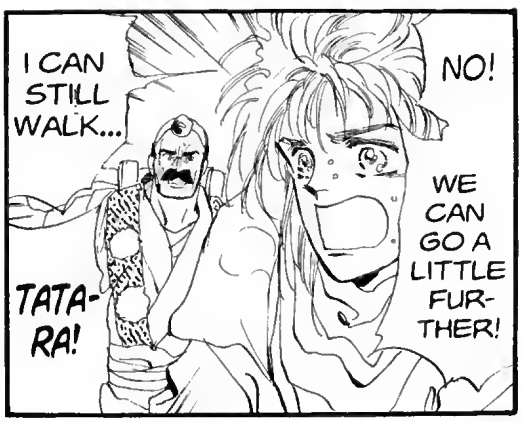

LOOK BEHIND YOU SOME-TIMES.
TATARA-- TURN AROUND.

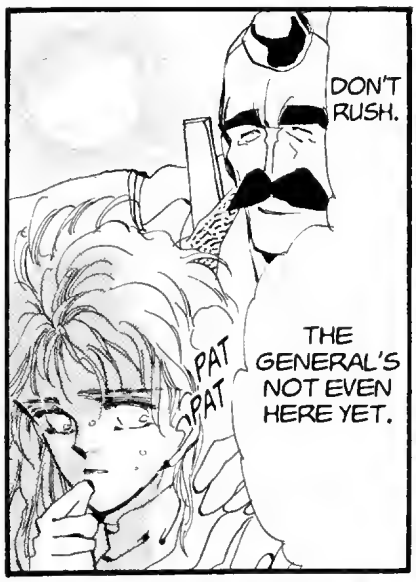

...THE TREES AND THE BUTTER-FLIES?
CAN YOU SEE...

I'M SURE THAT'S NOT TRUE.
THAT'S NOT LIKE TATARA, HAYATO.

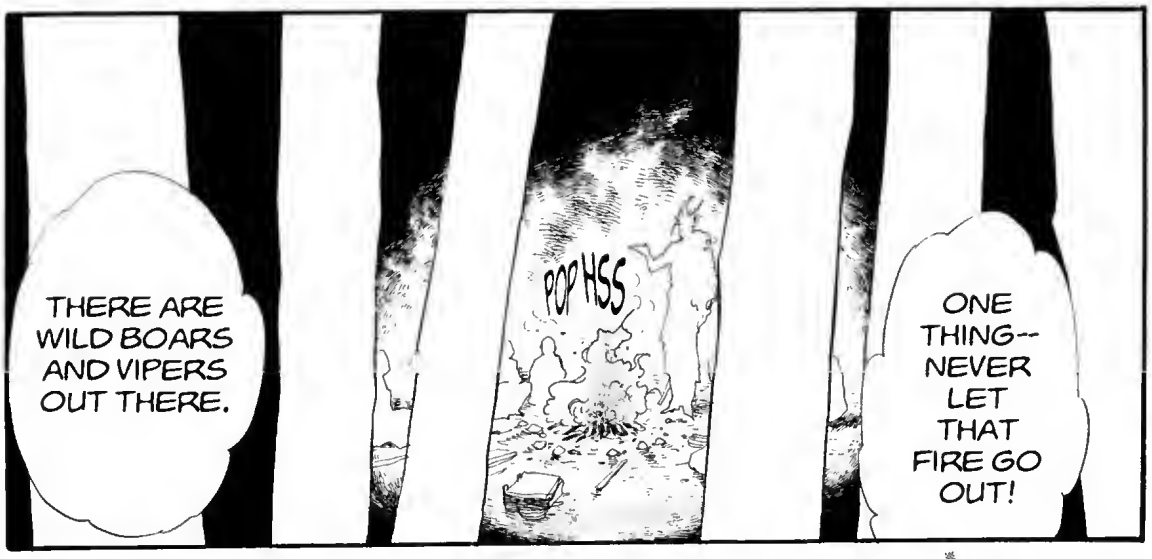
WE SHOULD SET UP CAMP.
CAW CAW
SO, THEN. GOTTEN PRETTY DARK, EH?

YOU'RE NOT TRAVEL-ING ALONE.


I CAN STILL WALK...
NO!
WE CAN GO A LITTLE FUR-THER!
TATA-RA!

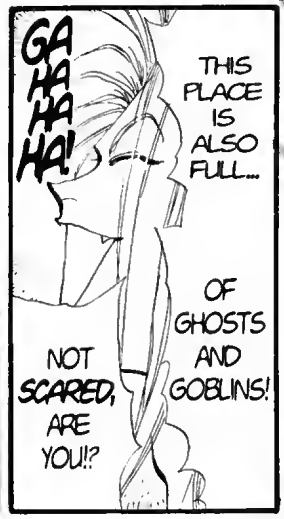

DON'T RUSH.
PAT PAT
THE GENERAL'S NOT EVEN HERE YET.

WEEZ
HFF
HFF


THERE ARE WILD BOARS AND VIPERS OUT THERE.
POP HSS
ONE THING-- NEVER LET THAT FIRE GO OUT!

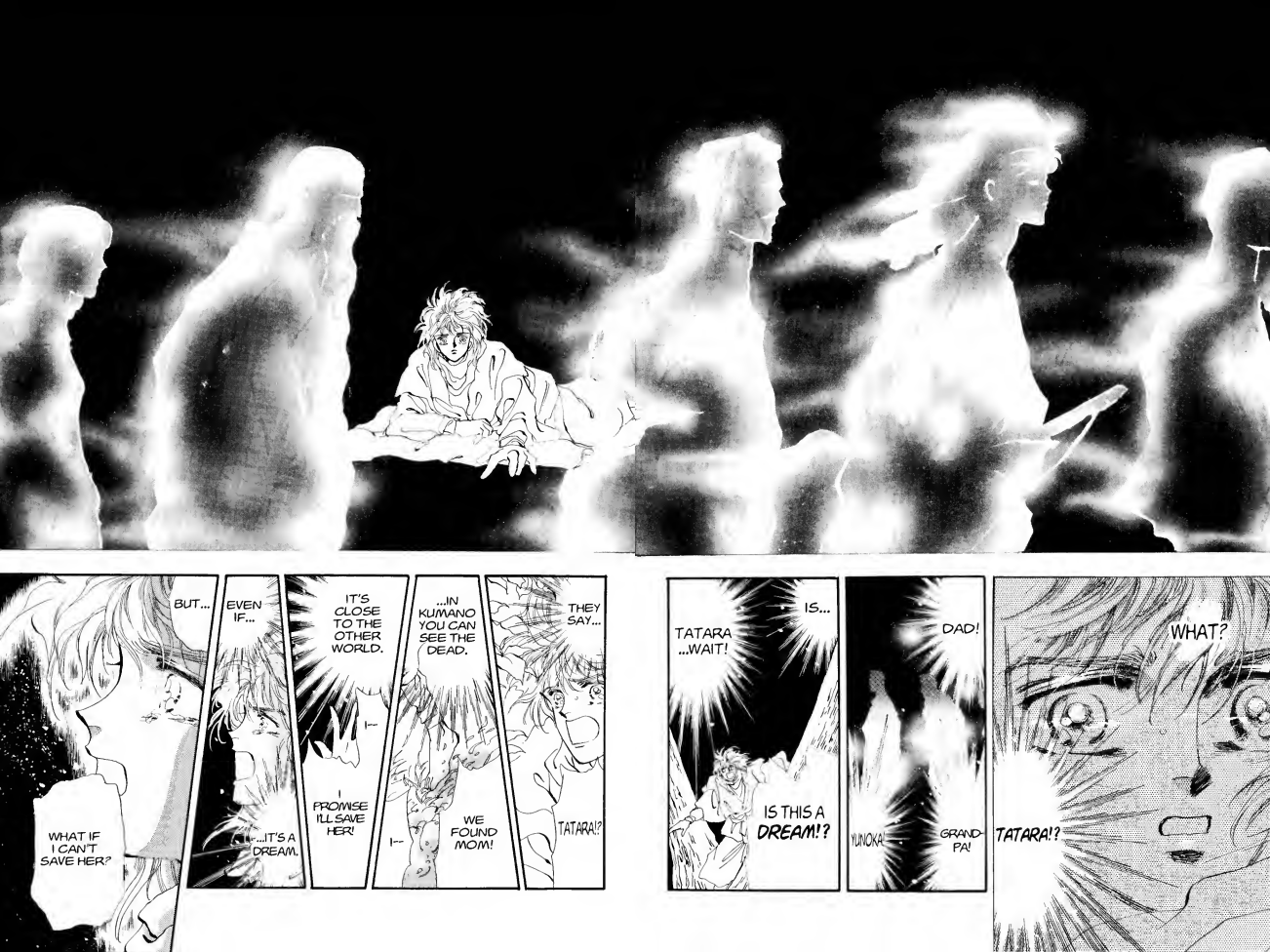
...THAT'S GOOD.
SLEEP WELL.
NOT JUST BOARS ...BUT BORES!

KRAKL


GA HA HA HA!
THIS PLACE IS ALSO FULL...
OF GHOSTS AND GOBLINS!
NOT SCARED, ARE YOU!?

USE THIS FOR MOSQUI-TOES!
A MODERN CONVENI-ENCE.
WE MAKE IT IN THESE PARTS.

SHHF
SHSS
HSSH
SKREE
BZZZ
BZZZ
I CAN'T SLEEP...
I CAN'T SLEEP AT ALL...
MOM...I CAN'T SLEEP.
WHOOOO


BUT...
WHAT IF I CAN'T SAVE HER?
EVEN IF...
...IT'S A DREAM.
IT'S CLOSE TO THE OTHER WORLD.
I PROMISE I'LL SAVE HER!
...IN KUMANO YOU CAN SEE THE DEAD.
WE FOUND MOM!
THEY SAY...
TATARA!?
TATARA ...WAIT!
IS...
IS THIS A DREAM!?
DAD!
YUNOKA!
GRAND-PA!
WHAT?
TATARA!?

WHAT IF SHE'S KILLED?

WHAT IF SOMEONE DIES...

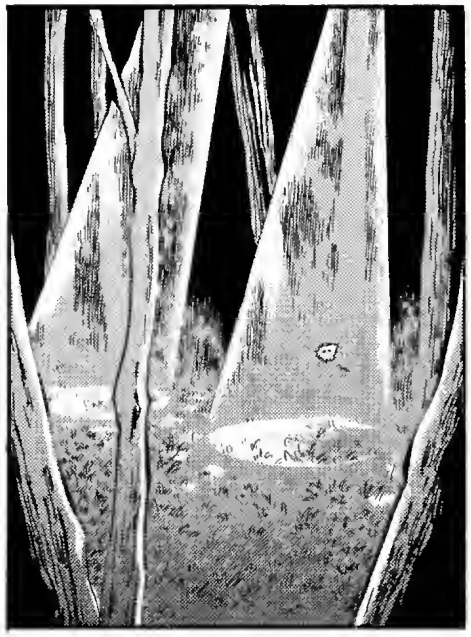
WHAT IF THE RESCUE FAILS...

WHAT IF I LOSE *EVERYONE*!?

LIKE *LAST* TIME?

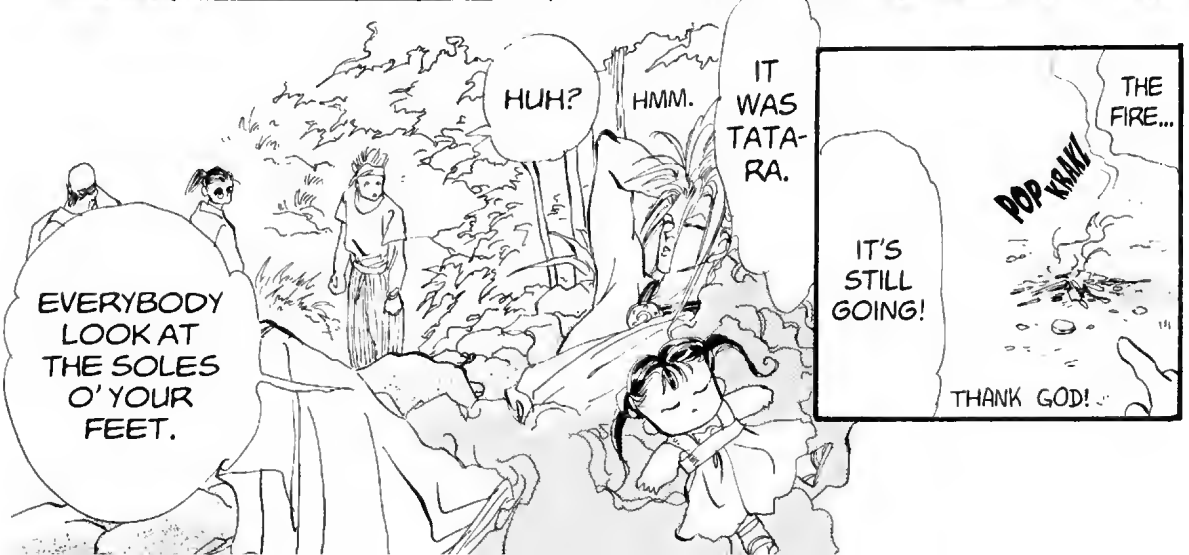
SHNRR
ZZZ
ZZZ
THEY MUST'VE BEEN SO TIRED.
ALL SOUND ASLEEP...
...SUCH STEEP MOUNTAIN TRAILS.
THEY'VE NEVER HIKED...
BUT NOBODY PROTESTED. NOBODY BEGGED FOR A BREAK.
OR BEEN IN SO MUCH HUMIDITY.

PLANTAIN LEAVES...
YUP!



TATARA...

I FELL ASLEEP!
THE FIRE--!
ARRG!
DAMN!
AH! ME, TOO!
FMP


EVERYBODY LOOK AT THE SOLES O' YOUR FEET.
HUH?
HMM.
IT WAS TATA-RA.
IT'S STILL GOING!
THE FIRE...
POP KRAK!
THANK GOD!

THERE'S SOMETHING STUCK ON.
WHAT THE HELL?
IT'S GREEN...
MINE, TOO.
IT'S PLANTAIN.
A POULTICE.
PICK PICK
HEALS SORE FEET.
THOUGHTFUL OF HIM.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I DIDN'T NOTICE.
DISGRACEFUL!
LUCKY FOR YOU THAT HE DIDN'T DISCRIMINATE!
GA HA HA!
SMOOSH
LET'S GET BREAKFAST READY!
I-I'LL GO GET SOME WATER!

YOU'RE RUBBING MY FACE IN IT....
HOW TERRIBLY GOOD YOU ARE... TATARA.
SSS
AH. THE CLOUDS FINALLY BROKE.
IT'LL BE SLIPPERY. BE CAREFUL!
YOU CALL THIS A "PATH"!?
SHMSHM
WHOA!
SLIP
SHOTA!
GMP

YOU'LL HAVE TO GET YOUR-SELF UP!
RRG!
I CAN'T LIFT YOU!

WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE!
TATARA!

SLSS
I'M ALL RI...

HOOH!

WHAT'S THAT!?
DON'T MOVE!
THAT'S A PIT VIPER!
I TOLD YOU YESTERDAY! IT'S POISON!

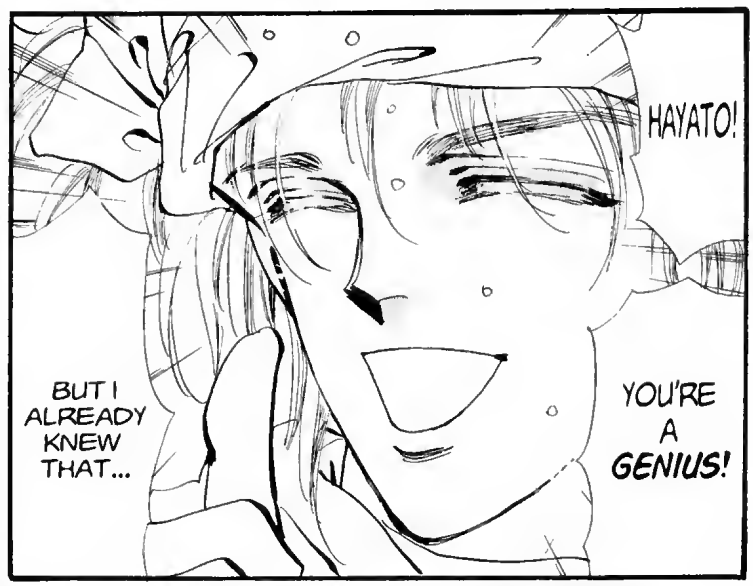
SSS
SSS

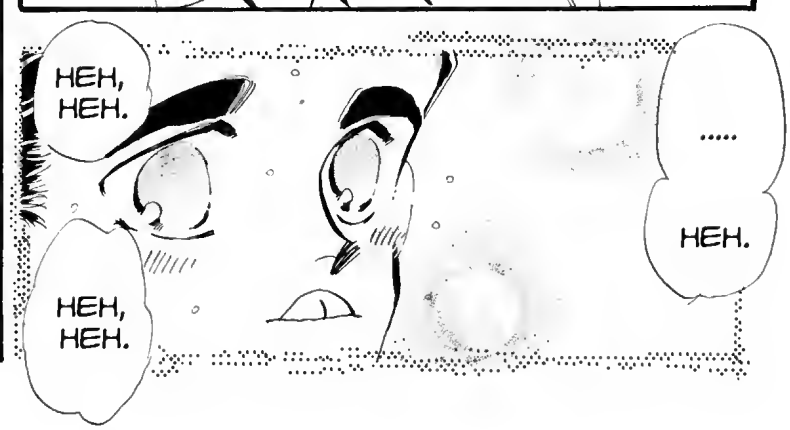
KA-
SK
HAYATO!
DO IT!
I'M SICK OF SNAKES.
SHOO!
I NEVER WANT TO SEE ONE AGAIN.
TATARA!
NOW I CAN'T GET CLOSE.
TATARA!

YEAH!
HE GOT IT!
GOOD JOB, HAYATO!
GRAB ON! YOU ALL RIGHT, SHOTA!?
SORRY, MR. PIT VIPER.

SIGH

WHAT ARE YOU SO HAPPY ABOUT?
HEH, HEH, HEH.
WEIRDO!
I COULDA DONE THAT.
HA HA HA
SHUT UP!
YOU WOULD'VE HIT TATARA!


HAYATO!
BUT I ALREADY KNEW THAT...
YOU'RE A GENIUS!


HEH, HEH.
HEH, HEH.
.....
HEH.

IS THAT SO...?
JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE BRAVE, YOU CAN'T ASSUME EVERYONE'S MORE COWARDLY THAN YOU.
SSHH
NOT THAT.
WHETHER TO HOLD ON OR LET GO.
TATARA NEVER HESITATED. I'M SURPRISED.
HE'S A FINE ARCHER.
WHY?
WHAT'S THIS?
WHERE'S THE PATH!?
I GUESS THERE HAS BEEN A BIT O' RAIN.
A LAND-SLIDE.
OH-HO.

OOF.

YO, HO!

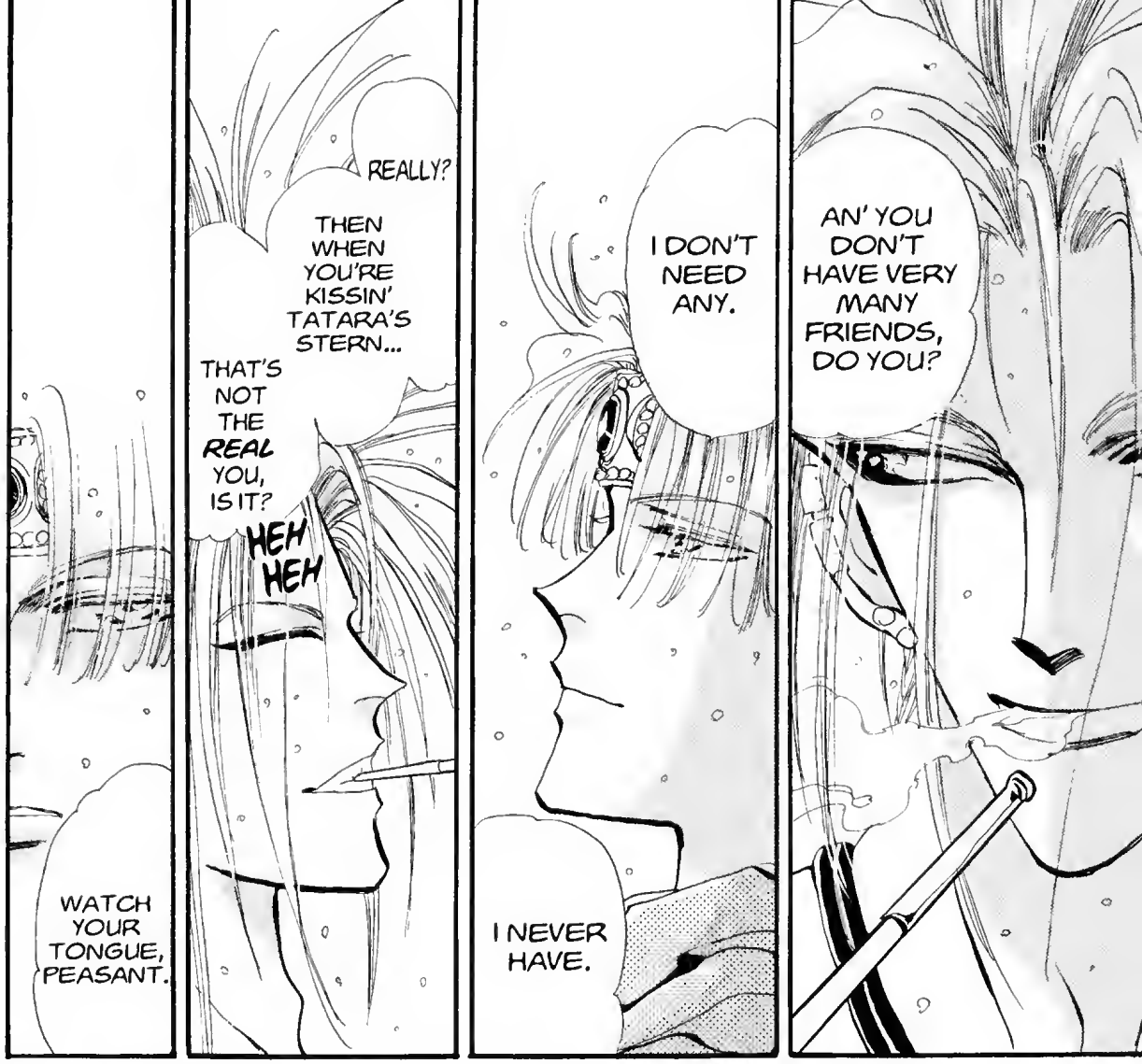
HUP!

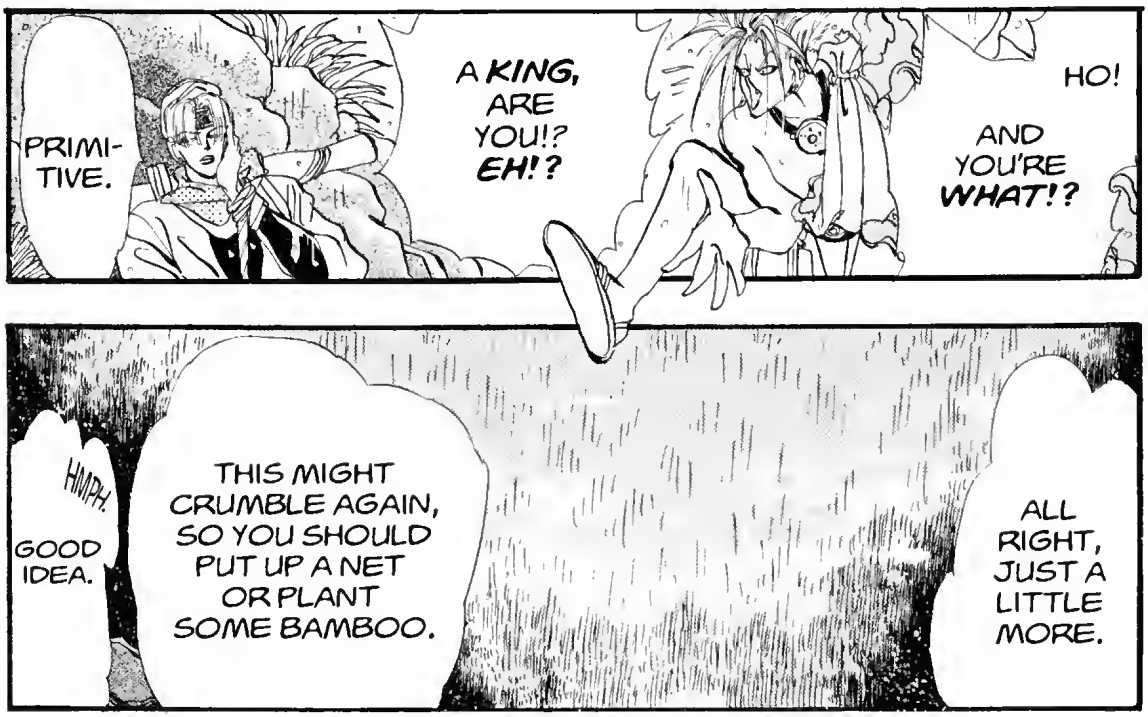
YO, HO, HO!

I DON'T *DO* PHYSICAL LABOR.

WHY AREN'T YOU HELPING?

AND YOU?


WATCH YOUR TONGUE, PEASANT.
THAT'S NOT THE REAL YOU, IS IT?
HEH HEH
REALLY?
THEN WHEN YOU'RE KISSIN' TATARA'S STERN...
I NEVER HAVE.
I DON'T NEED ANY.
AN' YOU DON'T HAVE VERY MANY FRIENDS, DO YOU?


PRIMI-TIVE.
A KING, ARE YOU!? EH!?
HO!
AND YOU'RE WHAT!?
HMPH.
GOOD IDEA.
THIS MIGHT CRUMBLE AGAIN, SO YOU SHOULD PUT UP A NET OR PLANT SOME BAMBOO.
ALL RIGHT, JUST A LITTLE MORE.

IS THAT...
...WHAT YOU WANTED TO TELL ME?
TATARA.
YOU WERE RIGHT...
EVEN THE LARGEST OBSTACLE...
...CAN BE CLEARED AWAY IF EVERYONE WORKS TOGETHER.
YOUNG MAS-TER.
AYE?
WHEN YOU'RE FACING THAT WHALE...
THERE'S SOME-THING I'VE WANTED TO ASK.
ARE YOU AFRAID?
...WHAT GOES THROUGH YOUR HEAD?

THAT WHALE.
THEY CALL HIM WHITE TAIL. HE RULES THESE WATERS.
HE'S BEEN HERE SINCE THE DAYS OF OLD, AND SWALLOWED MANY A FISHERMAN.
MIKI'S DAD AMONG 'EM.
HE MAY DINE ON ME TOO, ONE DAY.
IF HE DOES, THEN I LOSE.
BUT I HATE TO LOSE. SO I GO AT 'IM...
WITH ALL I'VE GOT.
AND BACK HE COMES AT ME WITH ALL HE'S GOT.
IT'S A GOOD FIGHT, IT IS.
AFRAID, YOU ASK?
I GOT MY SHIP.
MY HAR-POON.
MY FRIENDS.
THE SEA.
I'VE GOT TO BELIEVE IN THEM. AND IN ME.

THAT'S THE WAY...
...OF THE WHALER.
THE WAY OF THE SEA.

GAHAHAHAHA!

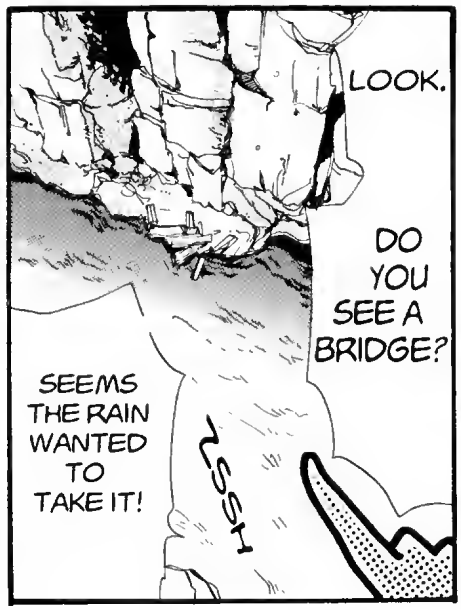
ALL RIGHTY!
HOW'S THAT?
WOO HOO! WE DID IT!

HEY!
THE RAIN'S EASING UP.
IT'S GETTING BRIGHTER, TOO.

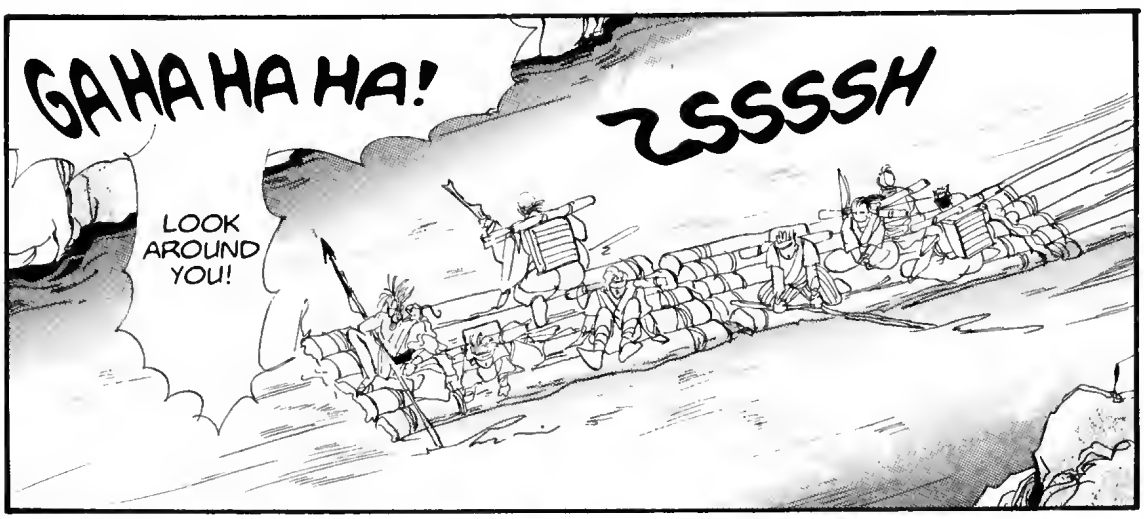
OH!
LOOK OVER THERE!

WE'RE ALMOST THERE!
HEY!
IS THAT THE SHRINE!?
IT'S A RAINBOW!
OOOH!

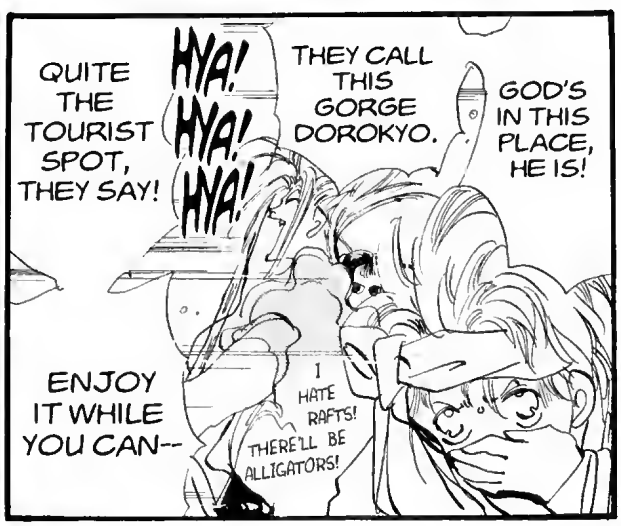
SO... I'M HOPING YOU'RE NOT TOO TIRED TO CHOP DOWN A FEW TREES!


LOOK.
DO YOU SEE A BRIDGE?
SEEMS THE RAIN WANTED TO TAKE IT!
ssssh

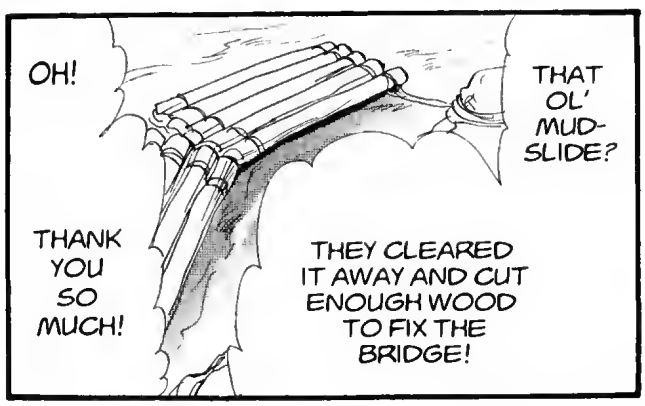
OH-HO!
NOW WHAT?


GAHAHAHA!
ssssssh
LOOK AROUND YOU!

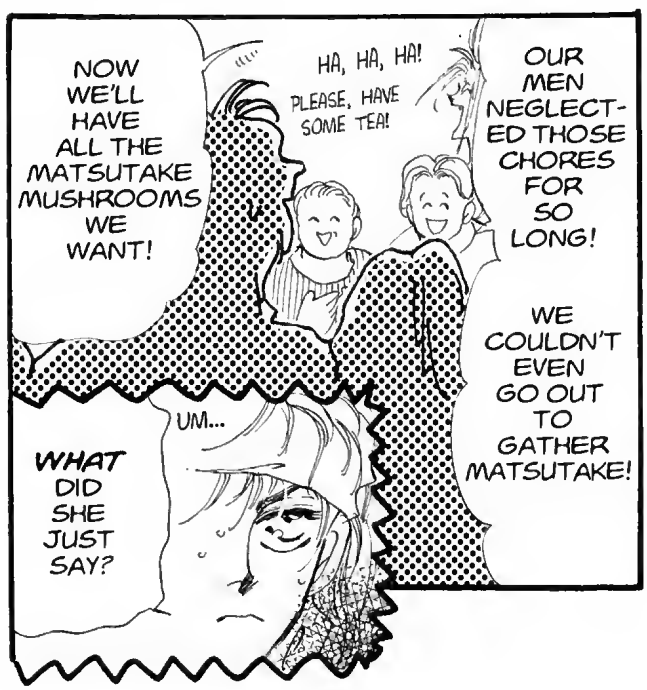
BECAUSE WE'RE HERE, MY LADS!


QUITE THE TOURIST SPOT, THEY SAY!
HYA! HYA! HYA!
THEY CALL THIS GORGE DOROKYO.
GOD'S IN THIS PLACE, HE IS!
ENJOY IT WHILE YOU CAN--
I HATE RAFTS!
THERE'LL BE ALLIGATORS!

YO, HO!
I'M HOME!
OH, MY.
YOUNG MASTER, HOW DID YOU GET HERE?


OH!
THAT OL' MUD-SLIDE?
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
THEY CLEARED IT AWAY AND CUT ENOUGH WOOD TO FIX THE BRIDGE!

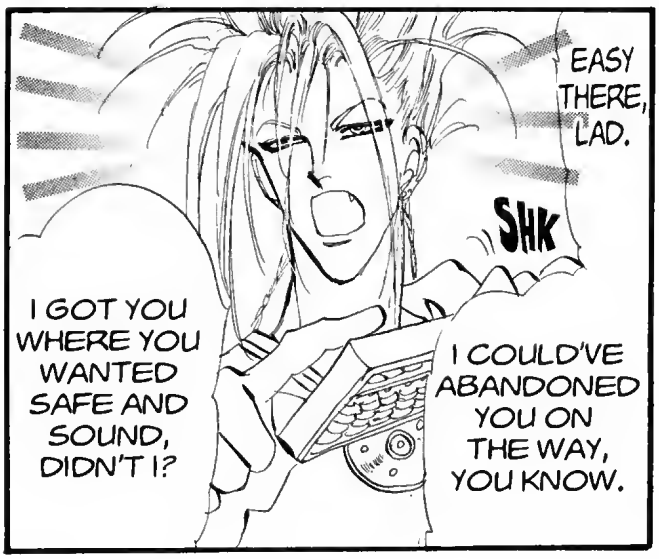
THE POLICE WERE LOOKING FOR YOU.
WHAT'D YOU DO THIS TIME?
WERE THEY, NOW?


NOW WE'LL HAVE ALL THE MATSUTAKE MUSHROOMS WE WANT!
HA, HA, HA!
PLEASE, HAVE SOME TEA!
OUR MEN NEGLECTED THOSE CHORES FOR SO LONG!
WE COULDN'T EVEN GO OUT TO GATHER MATSUTAKE!
UM...
WHAT DID SHE JUST SAY?

WELL, LASS...
I'VE BROUGHT THAT MAN-POWER YOU NEEDED!

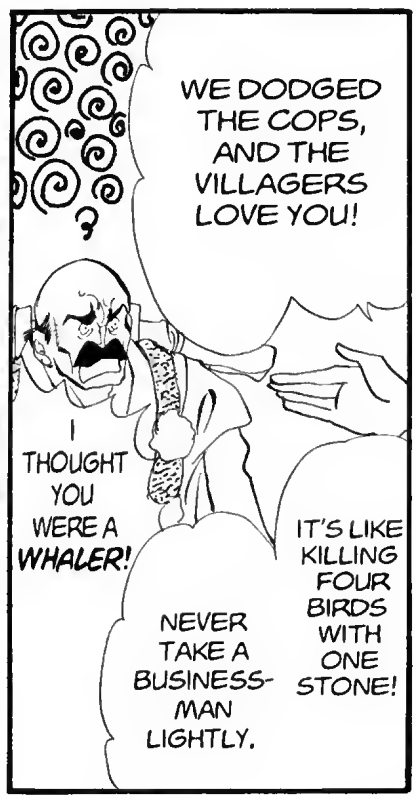
YOU'D BETTER NOT EXPECT ANY MONEY FOR THIS!
WHAT KIND OF GUIDE ARE YOU!?
GA HA HA!
I DID, IN-DEED!

NOT THAT!
AREN'T MATSU-TAKE GREAT?
TO HELL WITH MUSHROOMS! DID YOU MAKE US TAKE THAT PATH ON PUR-POSE--
SLURP
SO WE COULD DO YOUR WORK!?


EASY THERE, LAD.
SHK
I GOT YOU WHERE YOU WANTED SAFE AND SOUND, DIDN'T I?
I COULD'VE ABANDONED YOU ON THE WAY, YOU KNOW.

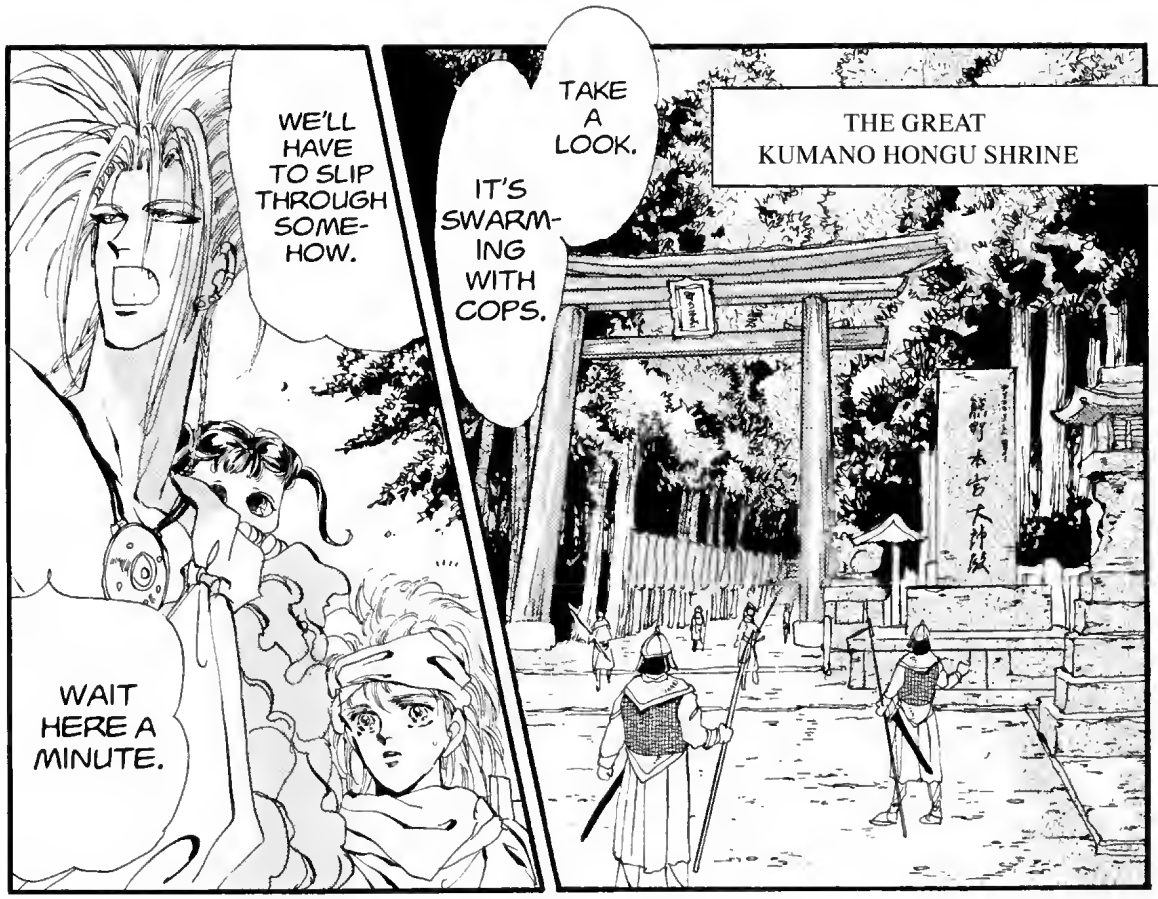
AYE.
HE'S RIGHT THERE.
AND WE...
WE COULD HELP, IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT.
KING UKON AND HIS PARTY WILL BE IN KATSUURA IN THE NEXT COUPLE DAYS.

PBBT!
SNORT
TATARA!
THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER!


WE DODGED THE COPS, AND THE VILLAGERS LOVE YOU!
?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A WHALER!
NEVER TAKE A BUSINESS-MAN LIGHTLY.
IT'S LIKE KILLING FOUR BIRDS WITH ONE STONE!

MY FATHER'S THE HEAD PRIEST AT THE GREAT SHRINE.
WELCOME TO MY VILLAGE.
AH, BUT I'M RUDE.
THE NAME IS NACHI.
THANK YOU.
WE'RE CHALLENGING THE GREAT RED WHALE--
OF GENERAL KAZAN!
IF I BELIEVE IN MYSELF AND MY FRIENDS, I CAN WIN!
I'M JUST LIKE THIS MAN! AND EVEN IF I'M SMALL AND WEAK...

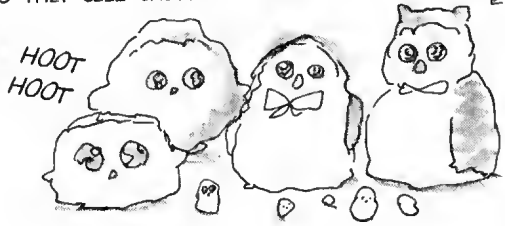
AZURE TALE 6: ASTRIDE A WHITE HORSE



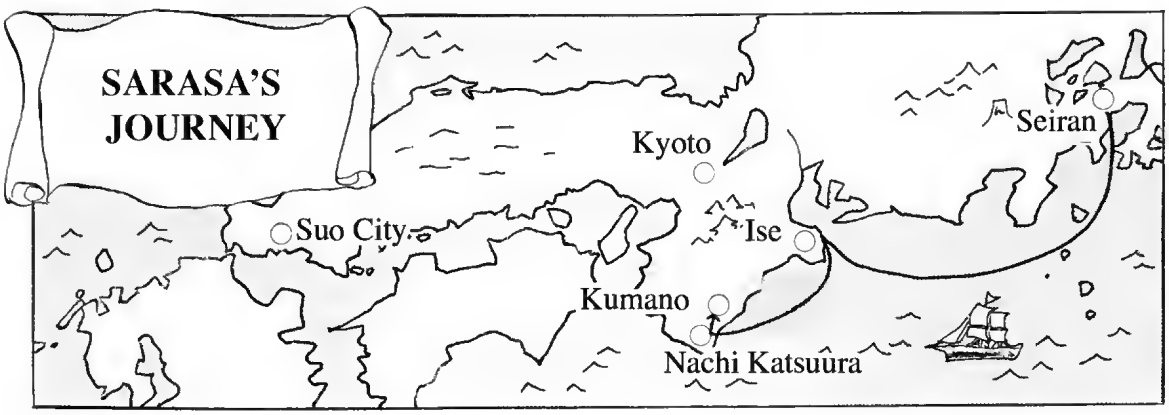
TINY TAM-TAM TIME ②

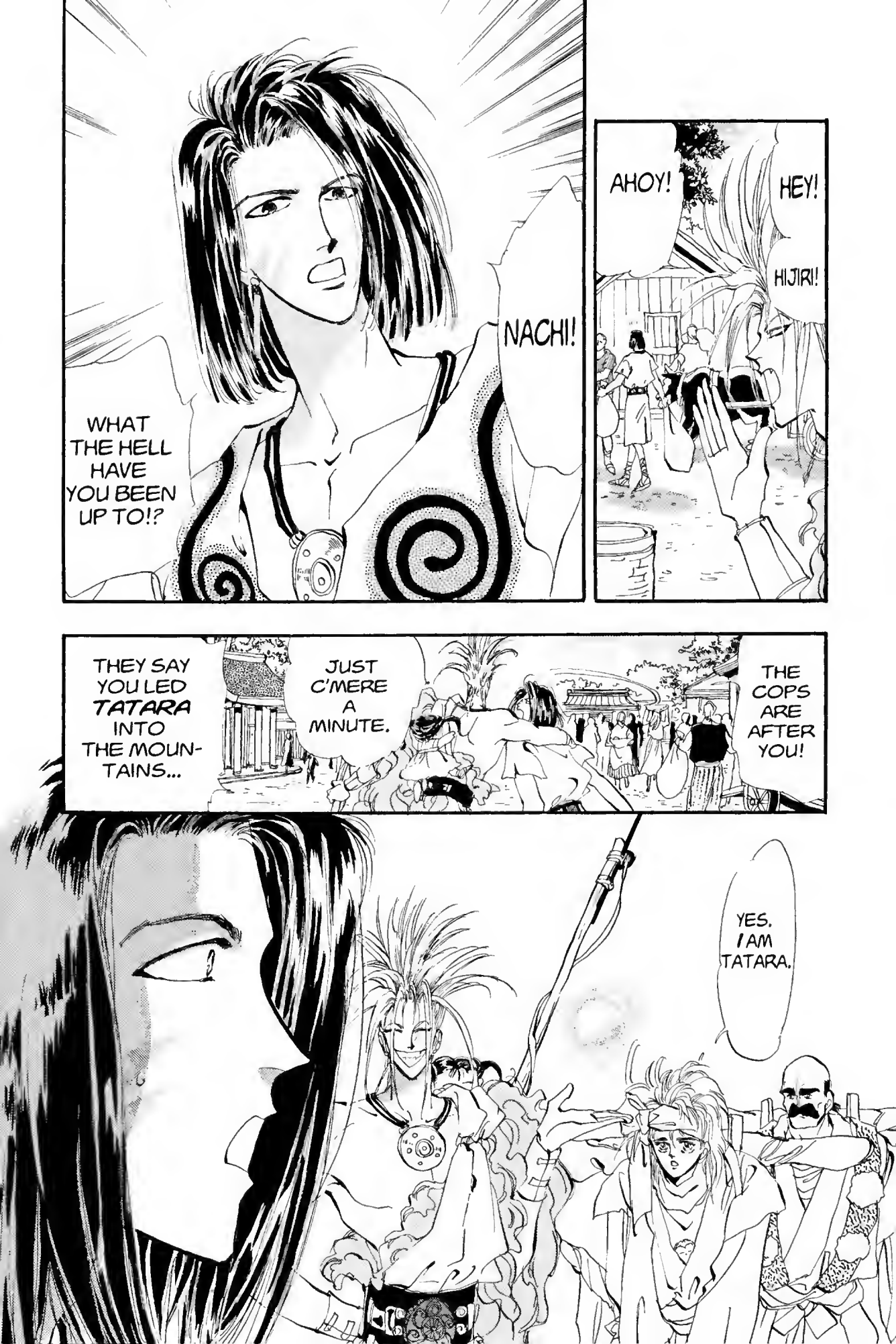
They don't!
I wish they would.
But I got a lot of presents
from people who found Shinbashi look-alikes.
And some people even made ones themselves!
I have a shelf full of Shinbashis at my house.
They all look like him. They're so cute!
Thank you so much for thinking of me!!

TAM-TAM Q&A:
WHERE DO THEY SELL SHINBASHI PLUSHIES?

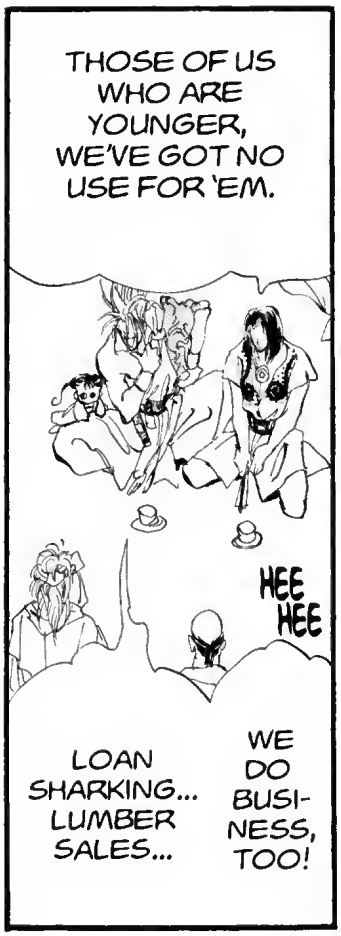


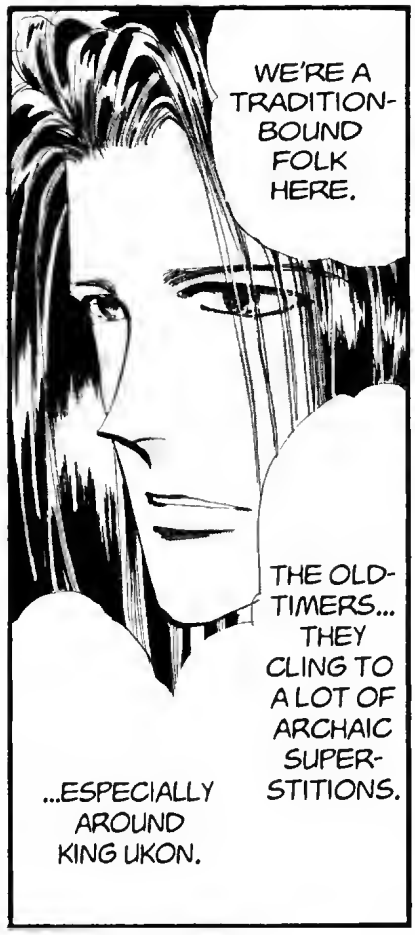
TAMU

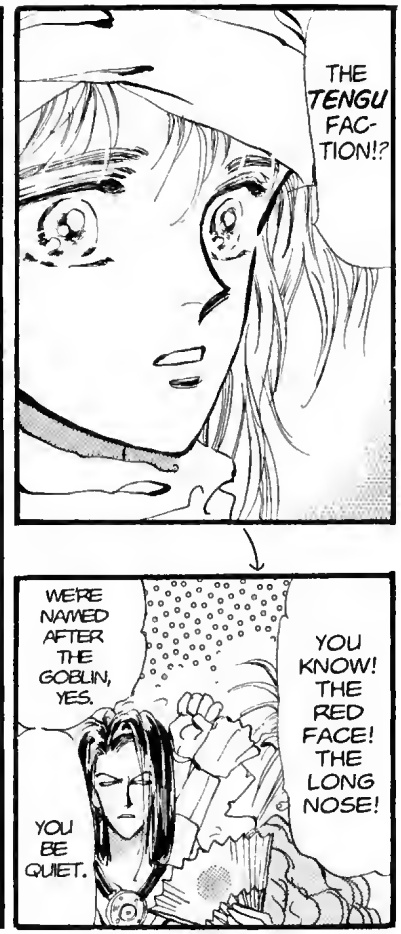


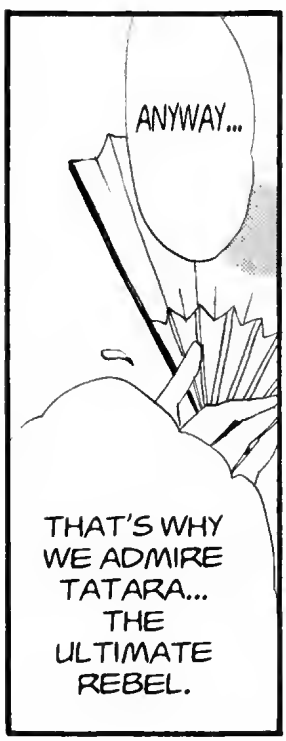

NACHI!
WHAT THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO!?
AHOY!
HEY!
HIJIRI!
THEY SAY YOU LED TATARA INTO THE MOUNTAINS...
JUST C'MERE A MINUTE.
THE COPS ARE AFTER YOU!
YES. I AM TATARA.

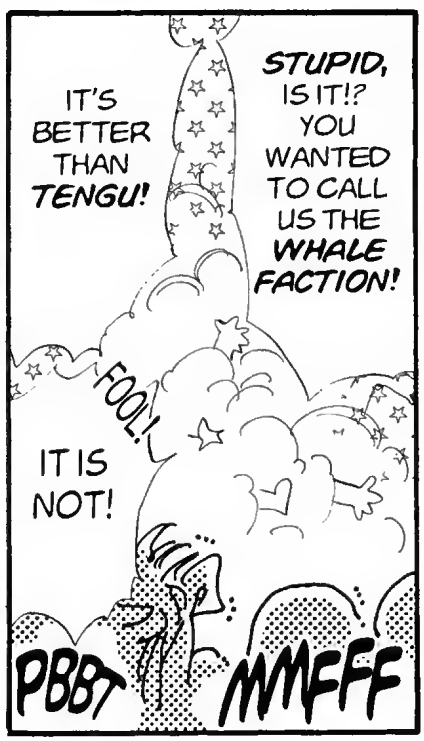
THIS IS OUR BASE OF OPERATIONS.
TRES-PASSERS ARE NOT ALLOWED, SO DO NOT FEAR.
HE'S A GIRL!?
FOOL! ARE YOU BLIND AS A BUTT!?
BAT.
BLIND AS A BAT!?
GIRLS ARE MORE ...GIRLIE!
MORE... WOO-WOO!
FOLLOW ME.
IGNORE THE FOOL.
AND... YOU KNOW... OOMPHIE!
I'M HIJIRI, THE LEADER.
THE POLICE CALL US THE "LOCAL GANG," OR SOMETIMES "DEGENERATE KILLER MONKS."
WHAT WE CALL OURSELVES IS THE TENGU FACTION. THERE'S ABOUT 30 OF US, ALL TOLD.
I'M NACHI, THE SUB-LEADER!

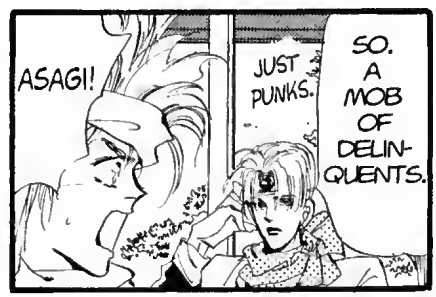

THOSE OF US WHO ARE YOUNGER, WE'VE GOT NO USE FOR 'EM.
HEE HEE
LOAN SHARKING... LUMBER SALES...
WE DO BUSI-NESS, TOO!

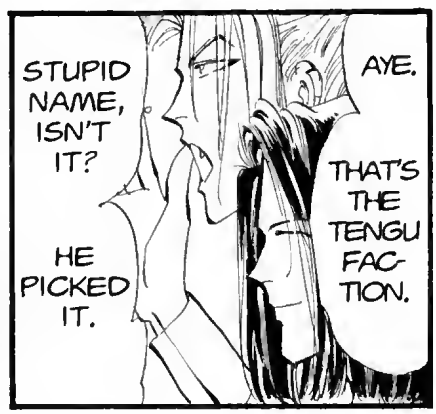

WE'RE A TRADITION-BOUND FOLK HERE.
THE OLD-TIMERS... THEY CLING TO A LOT OF ARCHAIC SUPER-STITIONS.
...ESPECIALLY AROUND KING UKON.


THE TENGU FAC-TION!?
WE'RE NAMED AFTER THE GOBLIN, YES.
YOU KNOW! THE RED FACE! THE LONG NOSE!
YOU BE QUIET.


ANYWAY...
THAT'S WHY WE ADMIRE TATARA... THE ULTIMATE REBEL.

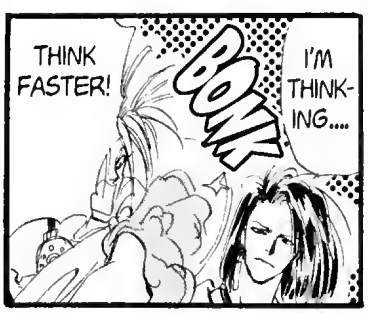

IT'S BETTER THAN TENGU!
STUPID, IS IT!? YOU WANTED TO CALL US THE WHALE FACTION!
FOOL!
IT IS NOT!
PBBT
MMFFF

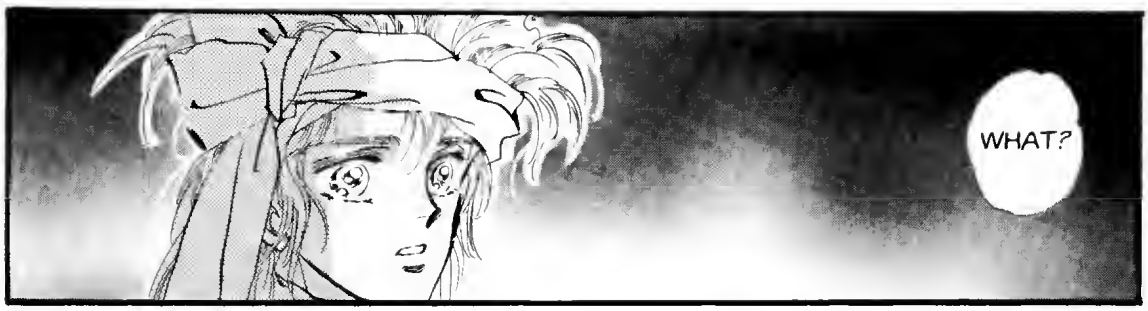

ASAGI!
JUST PUNKS.
SO. A MOB OF DELIN-QUENTS.

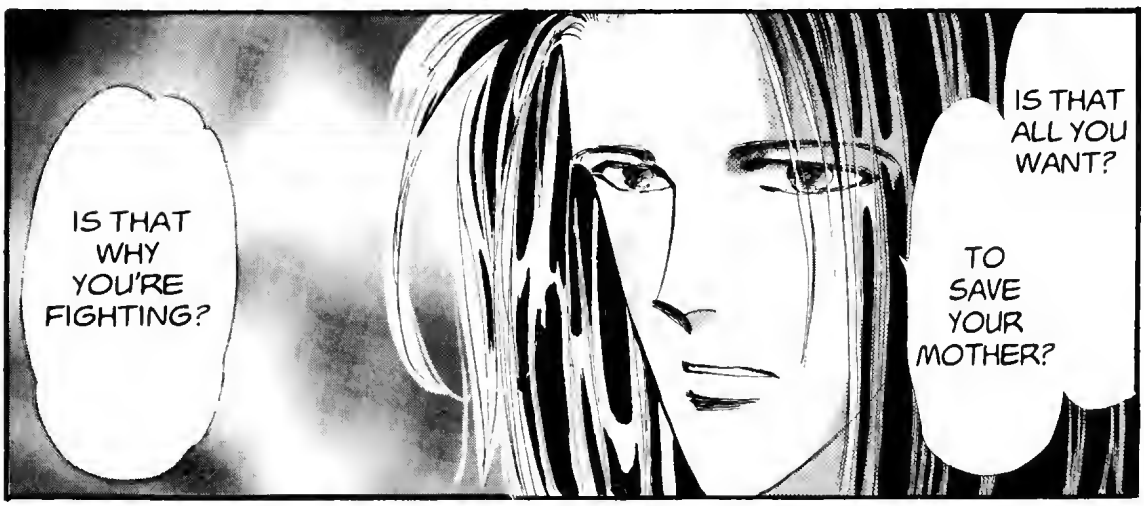

STUPID NAME, ISN'T IT?
HE PICKED IT.
AYE.
THAT'S THE TENGU FAC-TION.

I LOVE THEIR CONFIDENCE.

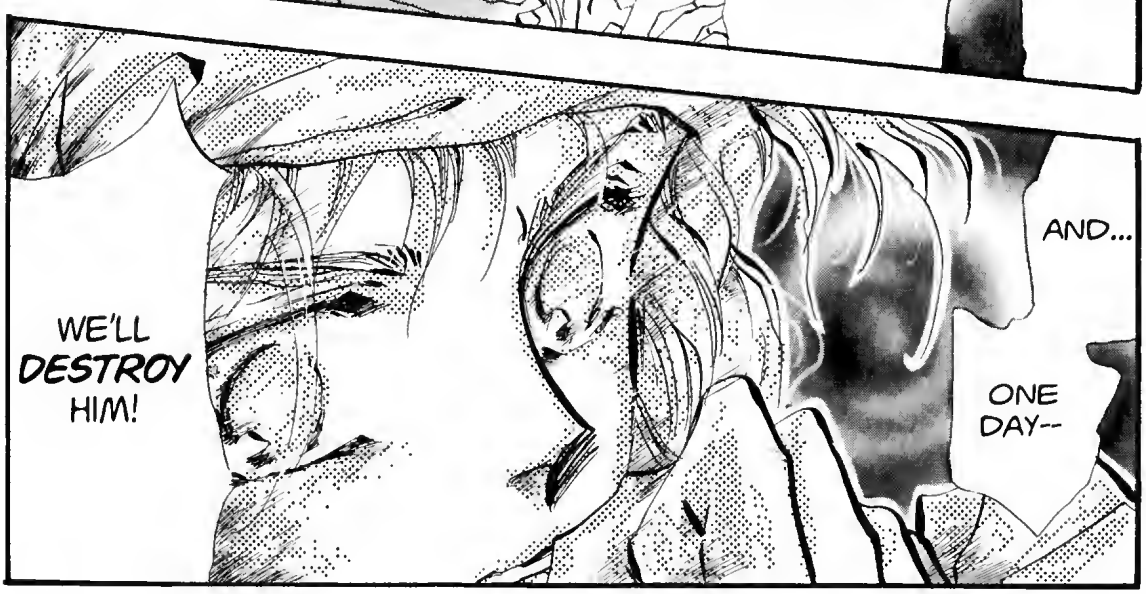
TRUE CONFIDENCE IS GROUNDED ON PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS.




WHAT?


IS THAT WHY YOU'RE FIGHTING?
IS THAT ALL YOU WANT?
TO SAVE YOUR MOTHER?

WE'LL WEAKEN THE RED KING'S POWER--
WE'LL DEFEAT GENERAL KAZAN.
NO, IT'S NOT!

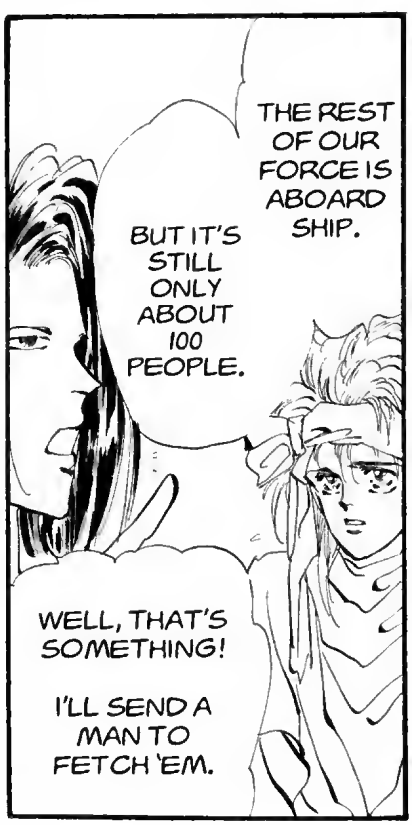

WE'LL DESTROY HIM!
AND...
ONE DAY--

AFTER YOUR PERSONAL REVENGE IS SATISFIED...
WILL THAT BE THE END?
AND THAT'S ALL?
NO!
AND THEN...
AND THEN?
BAM
WE'LL MAKE A NEW WORLD!
WE'LL DEFEAT KING UKON!

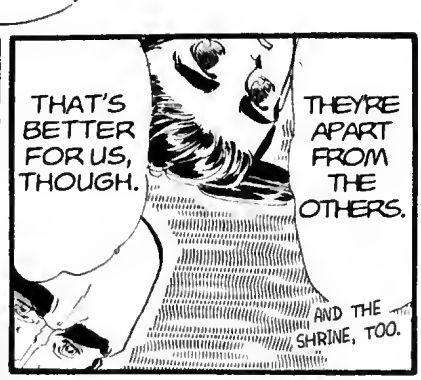
AH...
SNAP
AYE.
I SEE ENOUGH.

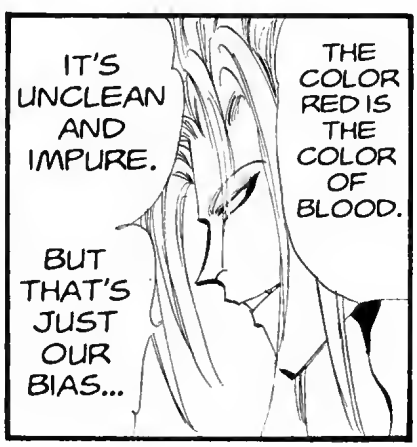
DAMN RIGHT!
AYE!
WE'RE WITH YOU!
IF WE'RE GOING TO RISK OUR LIVES...
OF COURSE.
IT HAD BETTER BE FOR A BIG GOAL!
YOU'RE A TOUGH NUT, HIJIRI!
WE'LL HELP YOU.
WAP
SUDDENLY...
THEY'RE ALL WITH ME.
A GOAL!
WE HAVE...
B-BMP

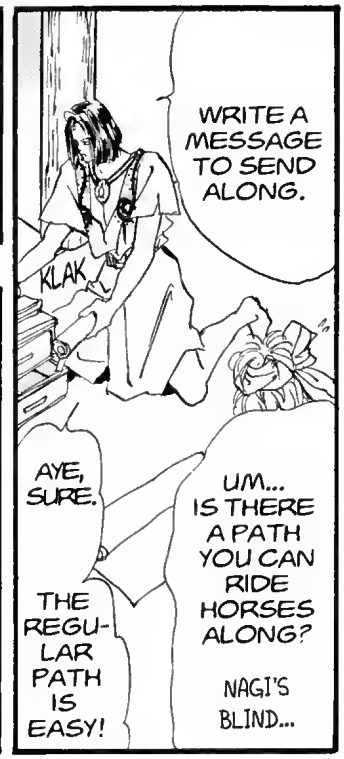
AYE!
NACHI, GRAB ME A MAP.
THIS IS ALL SECRET, YOU UNDER-STAND.
BLACK
KING UKON
WHITE
RED
THE RED ARMY WILL STAY IN THIS TEMPLE.
THESE ARE THEIR LODG-INGS.
AFTER KING UKON'S PARTY VISITS THE SHRINE, THEY'LL STAY IN HONGU.
GREAT SHRINE

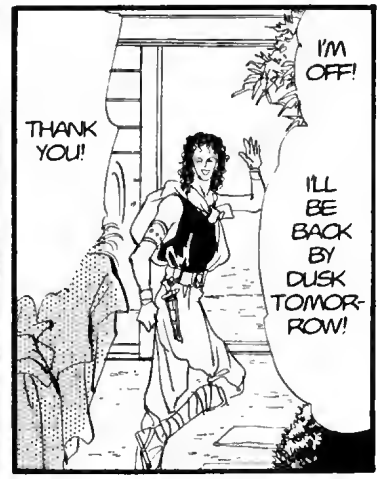

THE REST OF OUR FORCE IS ABOARD SHIP.
BUT IT'S STILL ONLY ABOUT 100 PEOPLE.
WELL, THAT'S SOMETHING!
I'LL SEND A MAN TO FETCH 'EM.

WE HEARD THERE'D BE 500 OR 600 MEN IN THEIR ARMY ALONE.
ONE, TWO... SEVEN OF YOU IN ALL?
WERE YOU GOING TO ATTACK BY YOURSELVES?
WITH JUST THE WEAPONS YOU CARRY?


THAT'S BETTER FOR US, THOUGH.
THEY'RE APART FROM THE OTHERS.
AND THE SHRINE, TOO.


IT'S UNCLEAN AND IMPURE.
THE COLOR RED IS THE COLOR OF BLOOD.
BUT THAT'S JUST OUR BIAS...





YES, SIR.

RAN-MARU.

ARE YOU THERE?

GO.

AW, C'MON, MA!
HELP!
HA HA HA HA HA

YOU'RE THE SON OF THE HEAD PRIEST AND THE FUTURE HEAD PRIEST!
NACHI!
I HEARD YOU WERE OUT PRETENDING TO BE A FISHERMAN AGAIN!
YOU WILL CONDUCT YOURSELF ACCORDINGLY
I WANT TO SEE YOU STUDYING! NOW!

HIJIRI! IS MY GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SON IN HERE!?
ACK! MA!

NOW, THEN.
A TOAST TO OUR NEW FELLOWSHIP!
YAY
YAY
TAKE A DIP IN THE BATHS AND RELAX.

HA HA HA HA

MOM...

NACHI FALLS HIRO SHRINE

SHM SHM

WE'RE ALMOST THERE!

JUST A LITTLE FURTHER UNTIL KUMANO HONGU.

BZZ BZZ

BZZ BZZ

KING UKON

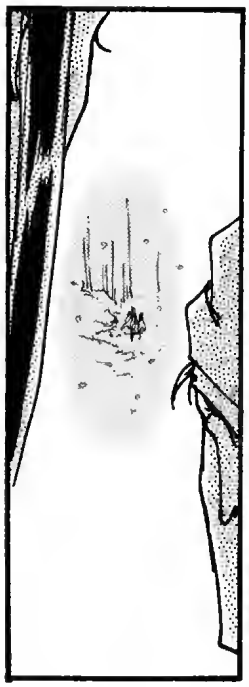
IT'S BETTER THAN BEING LOCKED UP.

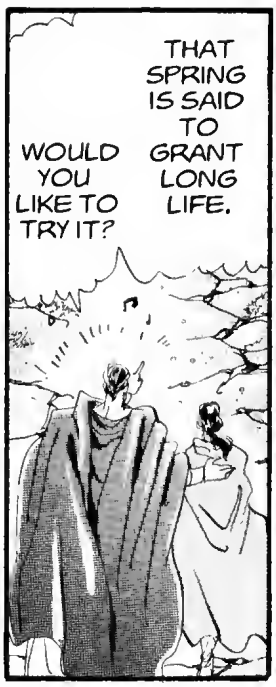
YOU MUST BE WEARY FROM THE WALKING.

...BECAUSE HE HAS SHELTERED ME.

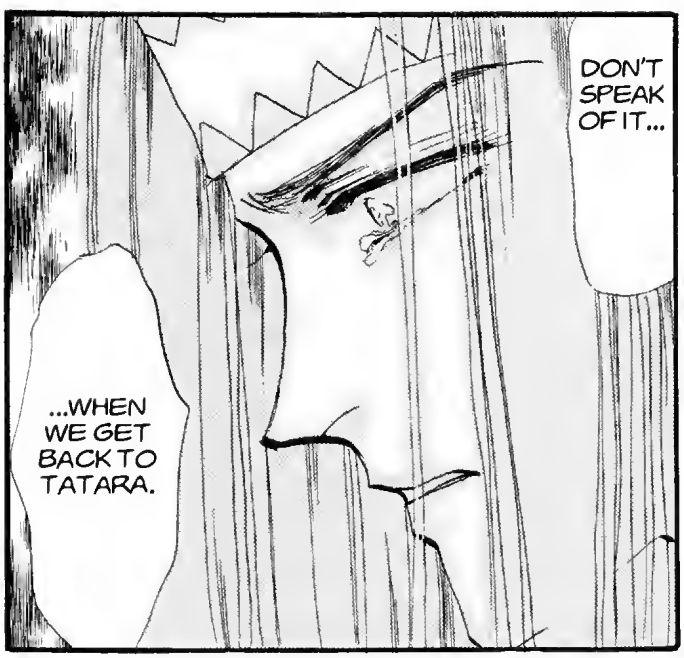
THE RED KING WILL PROBABLY KILL HIM...

SHMMM
...WHO MURDERED MY SON...
HOW COULD THE MON-STER...
...BE A "GOOD MAN"?
HOW?
HOW COULD HE BE A "GOOD MAN"?
SH
IT WOULD BE EASY TO CONTINUE HATING HIM.
MMM
IF ONLY HE WERE TRULY A MONSTER...
NOT UNTIL I WITNESS YOUR DEATH.
I CANNOT LEAVE YOUR SIDE.




THAT SPRING IS SAID TO GRANT LONG LIFE.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY IT?

WELL, THEN.
SNIF
I SUPPOSE WE CAN BE TOGETHER FOR A FEW MORE DAYS.


DON'T SPEAK OF IT...
...WHEN WE GET BACK TO TATARA.

ZAKI...
KEEP THIS QUIET.

...SHE COULD HAVE GOT-TEN AWAY.
ZAKI!

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS...
ZAKI...
...WE'VE GOT TO PROTECT HIM.
YES?
TATARA...
CHA-CHA...
ARE YOU CRYING?
ZK
TATARA...
ZK
ZK
ZK
TATARA...
YOU MAY HAVE A BITTER DISCOVERY AHEAD OF YOU.

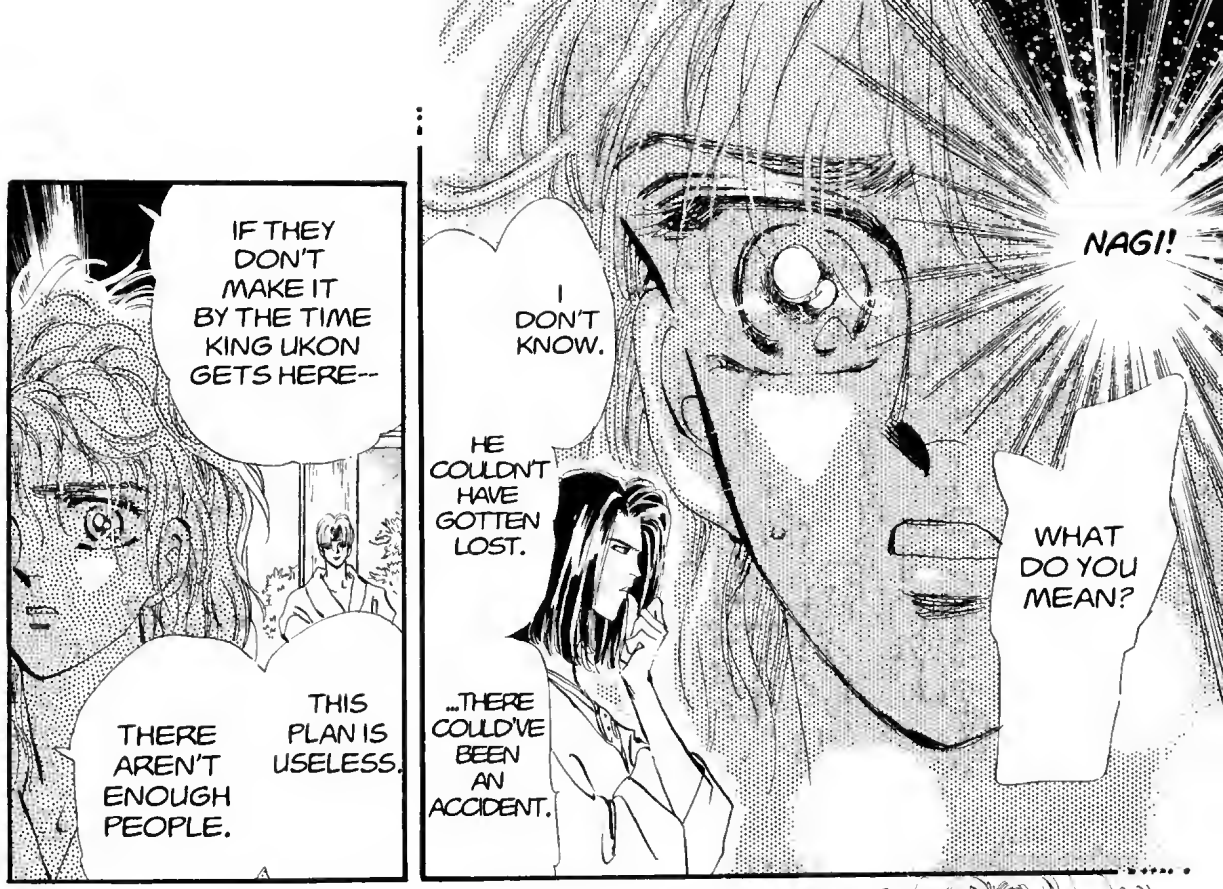
HUP. HUH?
ZK

PHEW! I'VE NEVER HIKED IN THE MOUNTAINS BEFORE.
ZK
ZK
ZK
IT'S SO HOT!

OKAY!
IT GETS EASIER AFTER THIS HILL.
ZK
STAY STRONG!

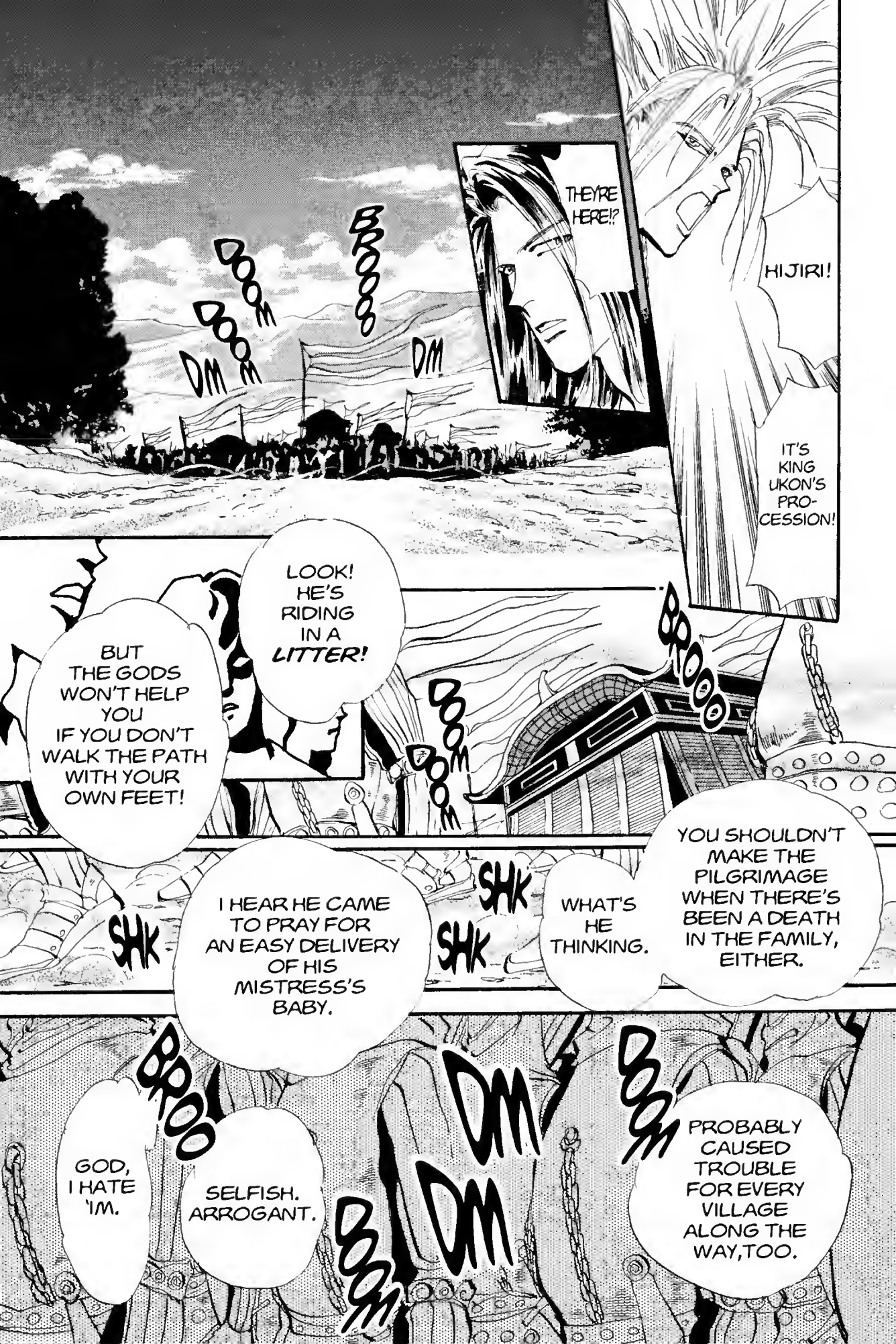
BLISS

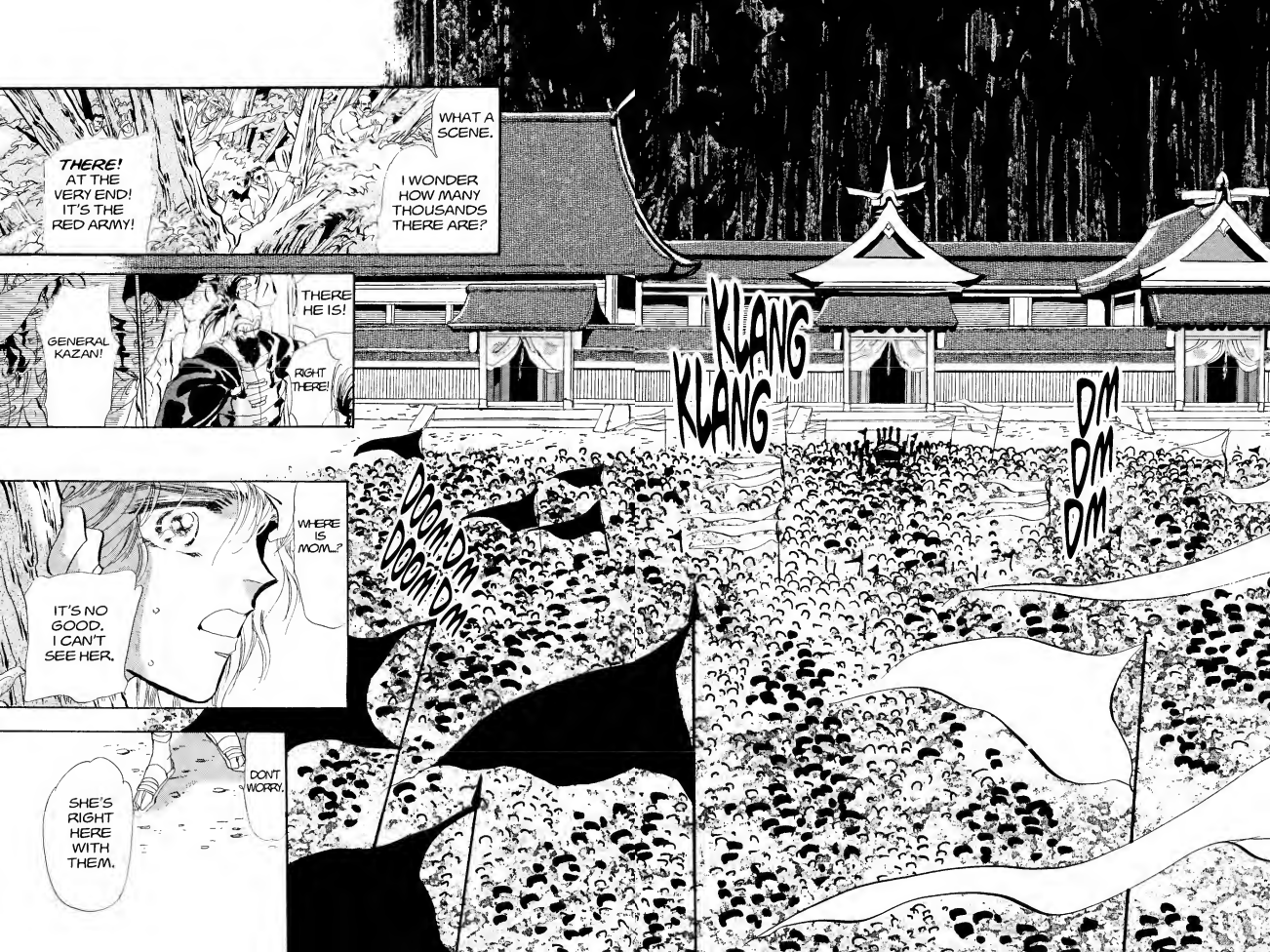
HA HA HA HA HA
TATARA DOESN'T WANT YOU TO SEE THE BIRTHMARK ON HIS BUTT.
OLD KAKU!
OH... SORRY. I JUST WENT WITH KAKU.
WHY DON'T YOU EVER GO WITH ME!?
AGAIN!?
TATARA!
LET'S GO TO THE HOT SPRINGS!
YUNO-MINE SPRINGS!
YOUR FRIENDS SEEM TO BE MISSING.
AND THE MAN I SENT TO FETCH 'EM IS MISSING, TOO.
I SENT A LOOKOUT DOWN THE MOUN-TAIN...
TATARA, COME HERE!
SOME-THING WEIRD'S GOING ON...
SHE'S A PRIES-TESS, SO SHE'S AT THE SHRINE.
BZZ
BZZ
WHERE'S MIKI TODAY?
EVERYONE'S CELEBRATING...
SHE'S AN ORACLE. THE GODS SPEAK THROUGH HER.
BZZ
YADDA
YADDA
IF THEY DIDN'T, THE ANXIETY WOULD BE TOO MUCH.


NAGI!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I DON'T KNOW.
HE COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN LOST.
...THERE COULD'VE BEEN AN ACCIDENT.
IF THEY DON'T MAKE IT BY THE TIME KING UKON GETS HERE--
THIS PLAN IS USELESS.
THERE AREN'T ENOUGH PEOPLE.

HEY!
WHERE ARE WE?
SHHF
WHERE DID OUR GUIDE GO?
LET'S SEND UP A FLARE.
NO! THE POLICE WILL FIND US!

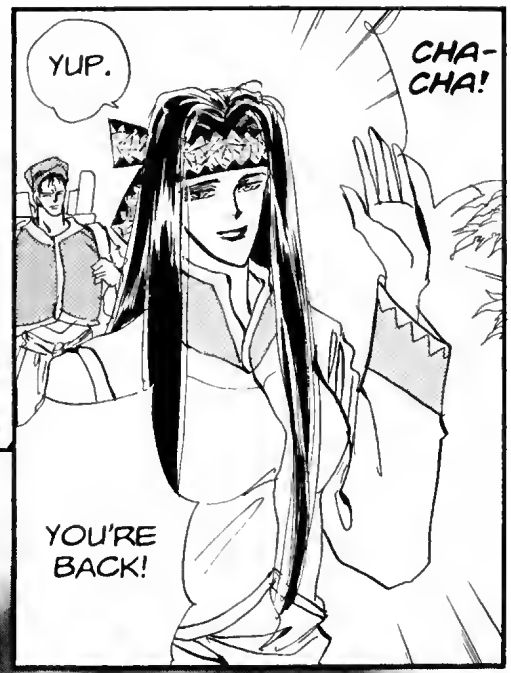
CHII
SKREE
TWEET
CHII
MASTER NAGI!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?


THEY'RE HERE!?
HIJIRI!
IT'S KING UKON'S PRO-CESSION!
DOOM
DOOM
DM
DM
LOOK! HE'S RIDING IN A LITTER!
BUT THE GODS WON'T HELP YOU IF YOU DON'T WALK THE PATH WITH YOUR OWN FEET!
BROOO
BOOM
BOOM
SHK
SHK
SHK
I HEAR HE CAME TO PRAY FOR AN EASY DELIVERY OF HIS MISTRESS'S BABY.
WHAT'S HE THINKING.
YOU SHOULDN'T MAKE THE PILGRIMAGE WHEN THERE'S BEEN A DEATH IN THE FAMILY, EITHER.
BROO
DM
DM
BOM
BOM
GOD, I HATE 'IM.
SELFISH. ARROGANT.
PROBABLY CAUSED TROUBLE FOR EVERY VILLAGE ALONG THE WAY,TOO.

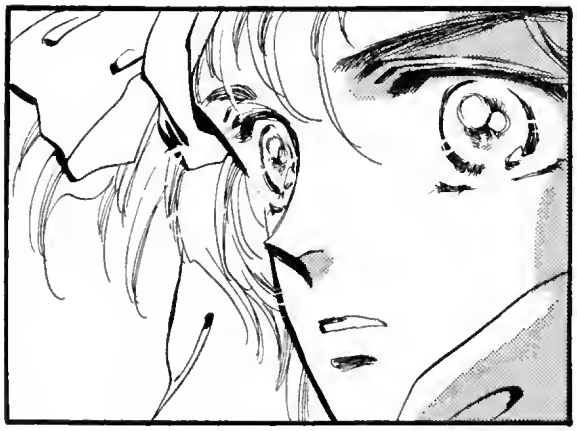

THERE! AT THE VERY END! IT'S THE RED ARMY!
WHAT A SCENE.
I WONDER HOW MANY THOUSANDS THERE ARE?
GENERAL KAZAN!
THERE HE IS!
RIGHT THERE!
KLANG KLANG
DM DM DM
DOOM DM DOOM DM
WHERE IS MOM...?
IT'S NO GOOD. I CAN'T SEE HER.
DON'T WORRY.
SHE'S RIGHT HERE WITH THEM.

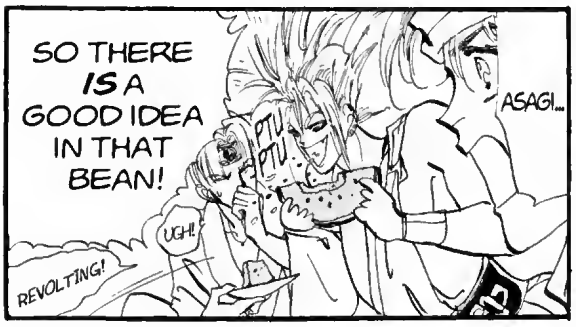
YOU MEAN...
WHAT!?
YOU DIDN'T SEE NAGI AND THE OTHERS ALONG THE WAY!?

STOP IT!
OO! MELONS!
BONK
WHERE IS EVERY-ONE?
THANKS FOR ALL YOUR WORK.


YUP.
CHA-CHA!
YOU'RE BACK!

I THOUGHT...
...THIS WAS A CHANCE OF A LIFETIME...
YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE UP.
WE HAVE LESS THAN 50 MEN. WE CAN'T GO UP AGAINST A FORCE TEN TIMES THE SIZE.
WE'D DIE FOR NOTHIN'.
THE WHOLE LOT!
WE SHOULD POISON THEIR MEALS!
WHAT ABOUT A SLEEPING POTION?
FOOL! HIS MOM WILL EAT IT, TOO!



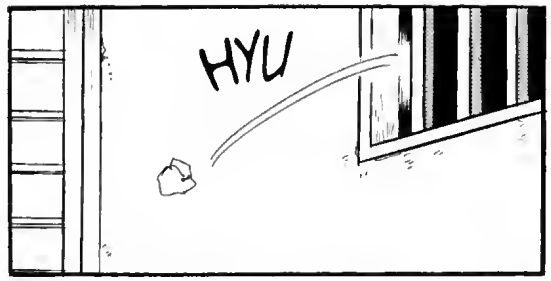


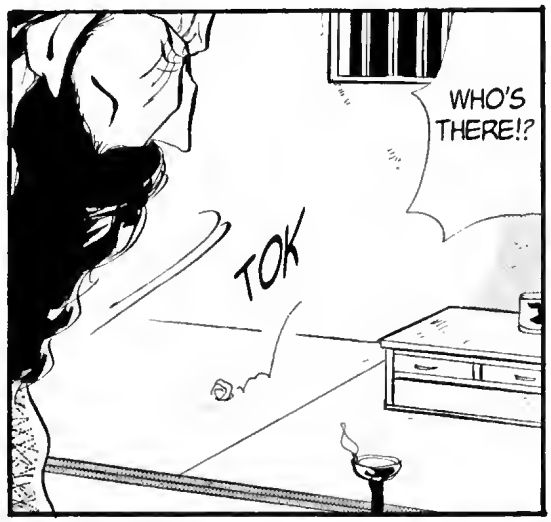
I'M SORRY, MR. CHICKEN.

THE RED ARMY IS HEADING BACK TO THEIR LODGINGS!
KITCHEN
SHK
SHK
SHK
OKAY, WE DID OUR JOB.
IT'S SET.
MM.
GENERAL, SIR.
DINNER IS READY.

A NOTE?

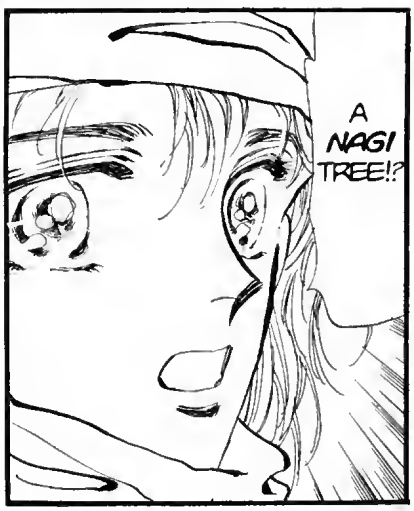
SKSH

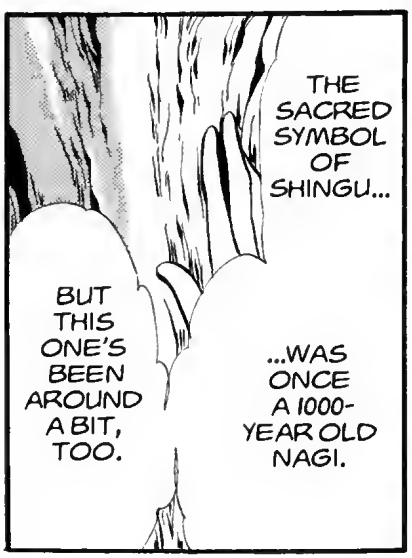

HYU


WHO'S THERE!?
TOK

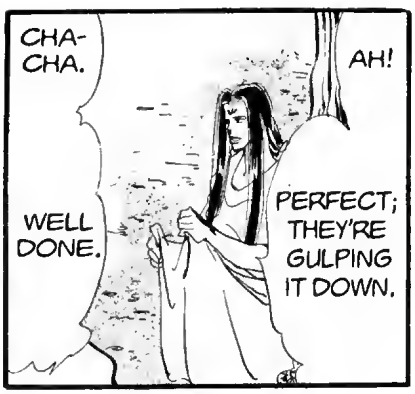
HSHF

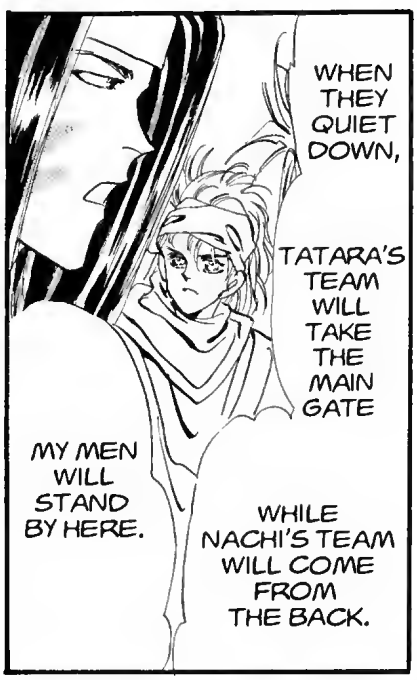
THEY HAVE NO IDEA THEY'RE BEING DRUGGED.
HA! HA! HA! WOO-HOO! MORE!
HA!
LISTEN TO THEM
CAROUSING. ANIMALS.


A NAGI TREE!?


THE SACRED SYMBOL OF SHINGU...
BUT THIS ONE'S BEEN AROUND A BIT, TOO.
...WAS ONCE A 1000-YEAR OLD NAGI.

BEFORE YOU GO--
EACH OF YOU SHOULD TAKE A LEAF FROM THIS TREE.
THIS KIND OF SUPER-STITION I LIKE.
IT'LL BE A GOOD LUCK CHARM.
IT'S A NAGI TREE, A KIND OF YEW.


CHA-CHA.
AH!
WELL DONE.
PERFECT; THEY'RE GULPING IT DOWN.


WHEN THEY QUIET DOWN,
TATARA'S TEAM WILL TAKE THE MAIN GATE
MY MEN WILL STAND BY HERE.
WHILE NACHI'S TEAM WILL COME FROM THE BACK.

"NAGI" SOUNDS LIKE AN OLD WORD FOR "CALM."
SO IT'S BEEN USED AS A CHARM FOR SMOOTH SAILING.
IT'S STANDARD PRACTICE TO KEEP A LEAF IN YOUR POCKET WHEN YOU'RE WALKING AROUND KUMANO.
THEY SAY IT WARDS OFF EVIL.
TSH
NAGI...
NAGI!
SINCE THE ANCIENT DAYS, WHENEVER HISTORY TAKES A TURN...
KUMANO IS ALWAYS VISIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND.

I'LL SEND OUT THE CALL.

JUST DON'T GET YOURSELF KILLED.

I'LL BRING ALL OF KUMANO TO YOUR SIDE.

IF YOU CAN SUCCEED AT THIS--

I DECIDED TO HELP YOU...

...BECAUSE NACHI BELIEVED IN YOU.

HE LIKED WHAT HE SAW OF YOU IN THE MOUN-TAINS.

MIKI, STAY HERE.

OKAY.

THANK YOU!

KAKU...

EVERYONE...

YEAH, LET'S GO!

TATARA.

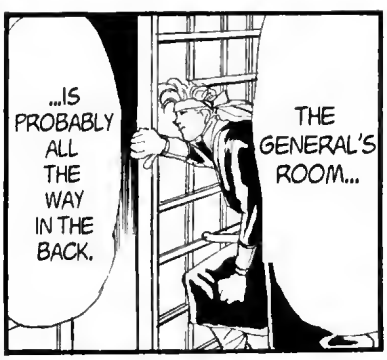
LEAVE CHIGUSA TO ME.

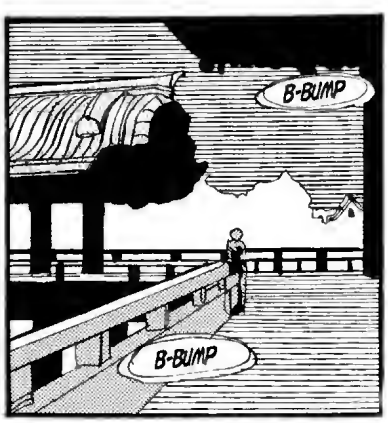
I PROMISE I WILL SAVE HER MYSELF!

THINK OF NOTHING BUT GETTING KAZAN.

IT'S TIME!

IT'S SURE QUIET...



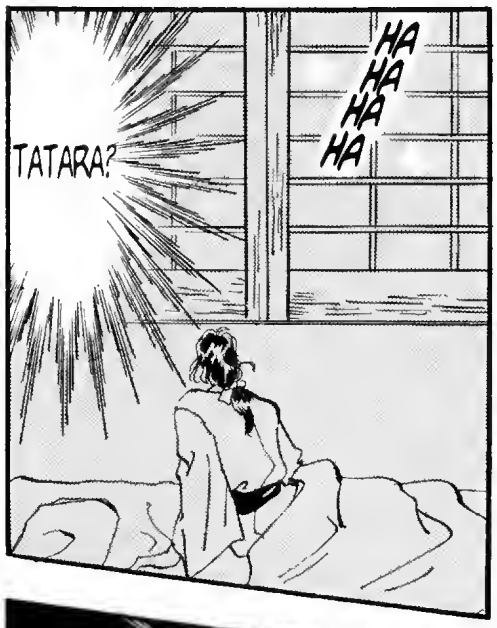


B-BUMP
SKSH
B-BUMP
B-BUMP
SKSH
B-BUMP
B-BUMP
SKSH
B-BUMP

BMP
BMP
BMP
BMP
BMP
HE'S IN THERE.
WOBBLE CHK
WOBBLE CHK
GENERAL KAZAN...
SNK
FOR THE BLOOD OF MY BROTHER...
YOU WILL PAY!

HEH.
HEH, HEH, HEH.
WEL-COME, TATARA.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
FUSH

HEH HEH
SOMEONE KINDLY SENT A NOTE AHEAD OF YOU.
THE SOUP, IT SAID, WOULD MAKE US SLEEPY.
SKSH
SKSH
HA HA HA
SO WE DID A BIT OF PLAY-ACTING TONIGHT!
HAHA
RAAAW


TATARA?
HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA
NOW I HAVE A FINE SOUVENIR!
THE HEAD OF TATARA WILL BE A WELCOME GIFT FOR THE RED KING!
HA HA HA
THAT AND MY OWN SUICIDE!

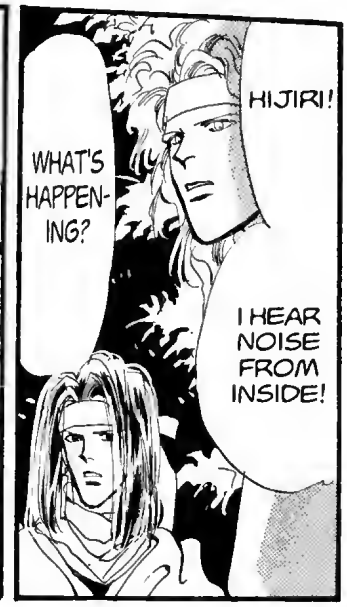
TATARA!
HA HA HA
TATARA!

TATARA!

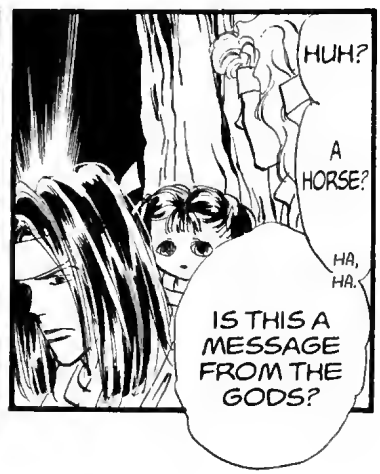
RUN!

IT'S COMING...
ASTRIDE A WHITE HORSE...
SOME-THING ...UNCLEAN.

HIJIRI...
WHAT'S WRONG, MIKI? ARE YOU AWAKE?


HIJIRI!
WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING?
I HEAR NOISE FROM INSIDE!

A WHITE HORSE...
WHAT'S COMING FROM THE OCEAN!?
LONG AGO, THEY CALLED WAVES "WHITE HORSES!"

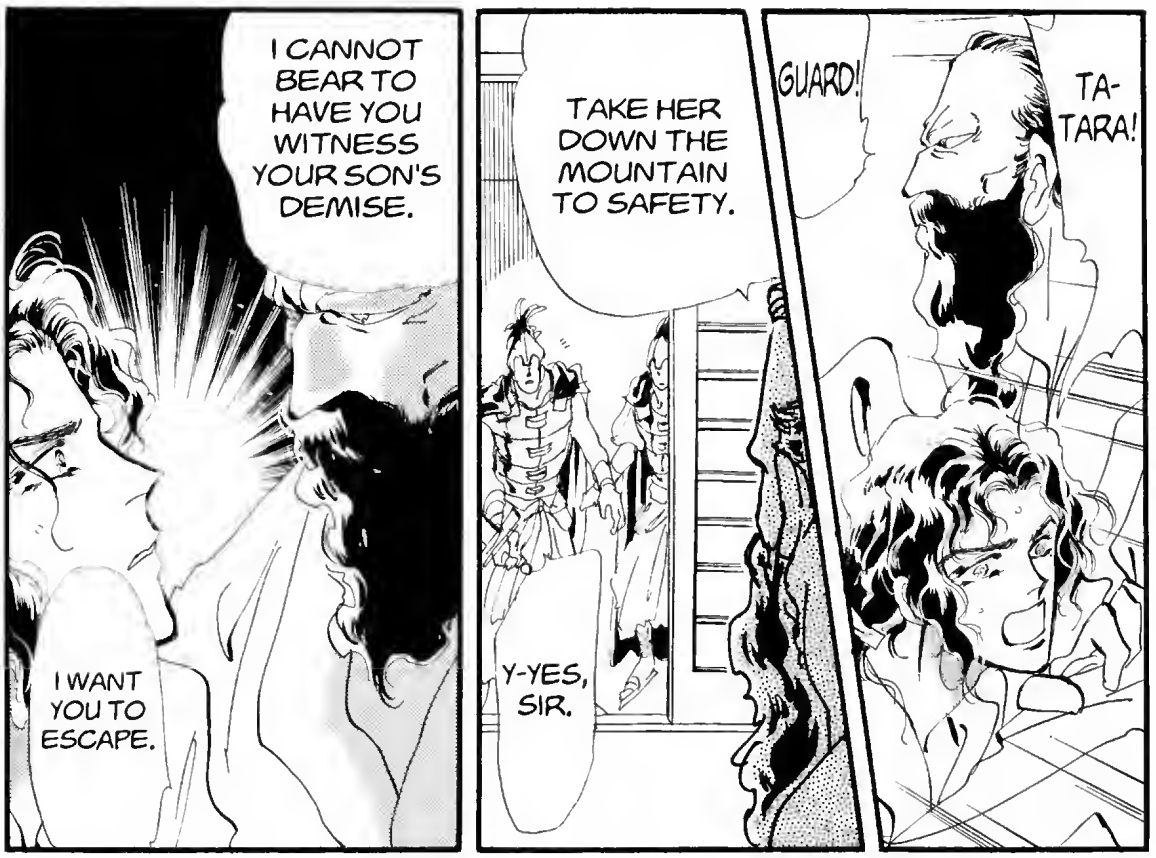

HUH?
A HORSE?
HA, HA.
IS THIS A MESSAGE FROM THE GODS?

SSS
...TAINTED BY RED BLOOD!
SOMEONE UNCLEAN...
SS
SH
HH
WE'VE ENTERED THE KUMANO SEA!
SIRE!
LISTEN WELL--
KAZAN IS THE ONE WE'RE AFTER!
I DON'T CARE IF YOU HAVE TO BURN DOWN THE FORESTS OF KUMANO, JUST GET HIM!

MOM!
TATARA!
TATARA!
TATARA!
SARASA!

MOM!
TATARA!
ARE YOU THERE!?
TATARA!
OH, TATARA!

AZURE TALE 7: THE EVIL FOREST



TINY TAM-TAM TIME ③

I'm a master at accumulating slippers around me.

I often notice that they're scattered in a circle.

(And I'm wearing a pair, too.)

I've been like this since I lived with my parents.
Why do I do this...?

It's still a mystery.
(Or maybe I'm just a slob who doesn't put things away.)

TAMU

NO...
NOOO!
NOW MY DAUGHTER WILL DIE BECAUSE OF ME!
IF ONLY...
IF ONLY I HAD TAKEN THE CHANCE I HAD TO ESCAPE!
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
WHAT WAS I THINKING?
WHAT...
TATARA!
GOD HELP HER!
I DON'T DESERVE YOUR HELP!
GO! FLEE!
TATARA!
SHE'S MY BABY GIRL!
SHE'S MY CHILD!

SHE'S JUST A LITTLE GIRL!

AAAH!

SHE'S ONLY 15!

SHMP

JAB

MOM!?

TATARA, GET BACK!

MOM!

I'M SORRY...

LADY CHIGUSA.

RRRIP
NOW...
I CAN FIGHT WITHOUT HESITATION.

GENERAL KAZAN!
...HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY MOTHER!?
WHAT...
YOU ARE GOING TO DIE SOON ANYWAY.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE CROSSED PATHS?
WHAT!?
THIS IS TOO MUCH FOR YOU!
TATARA!
I HOPE WE CAN MAKE THIS OUR LAST.

FLASH
TO FIGHT A GIANT LIKE HIM...
YOU NEED ME!
CHA-CHA!
GO LOOK FOR YOUR MOTHER!
WATCH OVER HIM.
AND DON'T YOU LET TATARA GET KILLED!
THAT GOES FOR EVERY ONE OF YOU!
CHA-CHA...
ZAKI!
THIS ISN'T A DEBATE! JUST DO IT!
STAY WITH TATARA!
CHACHA!

I COULDN'T TELL TATARA ABOUT KAZAN AND HIS MOTHER.
THIS IS MY FAULT.
I BROUGHT THIS ON MYSELF.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO GOES FIRST!
HA HA HA HA!
WE OUTNUMBER YOU BY FAR!
GET THEM!
RRRAAAAA

KANG
RRMMB
MOM!
MOM!
HE'S RIGHT THERE!
KAZAN!
THE MAN WHO KILLED MY BROTHER--
KANG
UNH!
I STILL CAN'T GET TO HIM!

NOT YET.
I CAN'T HAVE TATARA DIE YET. IT'S NOT YOUR TIME.
GAH!
ASAGI!?
I CAN'T PROMISE YOU THAT.
PLEASE-- PROTECT EVERYONE!
ASAGI!
YOU'RE THE MOST SKILLED OF US ALL!
FSSH
FSSH
ALL I WANT...
MOVE!
OUT OF MY WAY!
HA HA HA HA!
...IS TO MOW DOWN THE RED ARMY!

HAYATO, DON'T GET DISTRACTED!
BETTER THAN HE LETS ON.
ASAGI'S PRETTY GOOD!
KASHNK
KAZAN IS MINE!
CHACHA!
I'LL GET HIM!
CHACHA!
TMPTMPTMP
AS YOU WISH.
CHK
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, YOU HOG!
YOU WON'T BE LAYING A FINGER ON TATARA!
MY ONLY REGRET--
IS THAT THE RED KING ISN'T HERE!

YOU HAVE THE EYES OF ONE WHO IS PREPARED FOR DEATH.
I LIKE THOSE EYES, WOMAN.
HOWEVER,
I, TOO, AM PREPARED FOR DEATH.
I'LL SHOW YOU NO MERCY JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A WOMAN!
RRRAAAA
CHACHA, NO!

RATTLE RATTLE

FASTER!

DMDMDM..

WE'RE GETTING THIS DONE *TONIGHT!*

HURRY!

RATTLE RATTLE

TAKE IT UP THE MOUNTAIN!

DMDMDM

EVEN IN *MY* EYES, THE GENERAL WAS MORE LOYAL THAN ANYONE!

YOU MUSTN'T ATTACK HIM!

HE WAS THE BEST OF MILITARY COMMANDERS!

PLEASE, *THINK,* SIRE!

YOU MUSTN'T TURN ON GENERAL KAZAN!

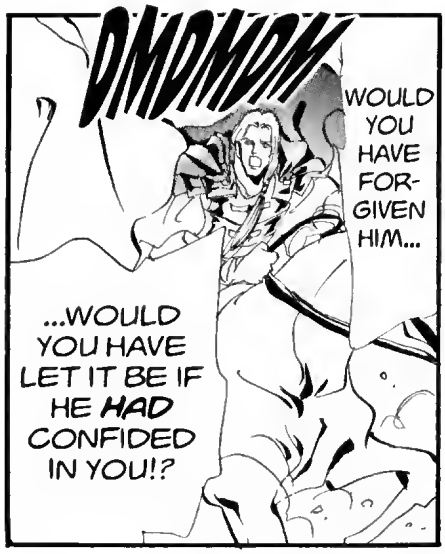
KTA KTA KTA KTA KTA KTA

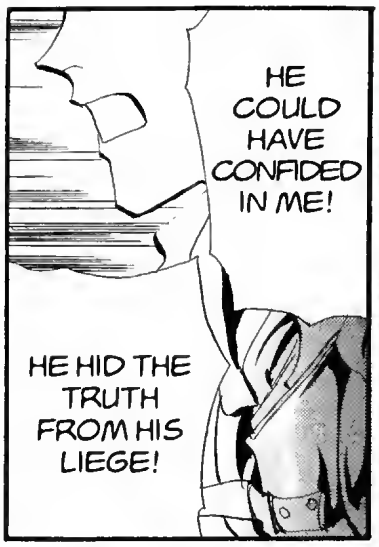
SIRE!

PLEASE, SIRE, WAIT!

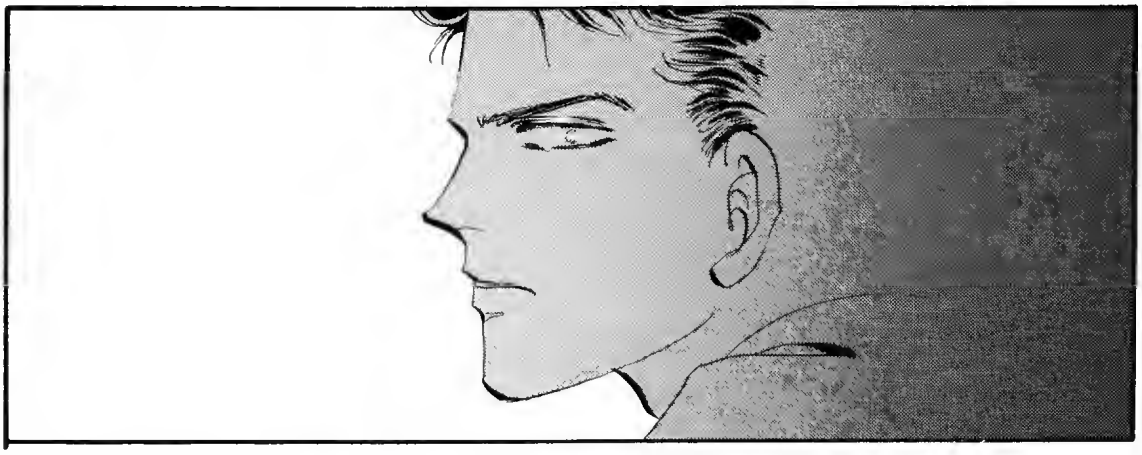
I WANT YOU BACK ON THE SHIP!

WHAT IS IT, SAKAKI!?


DMDMDM
WOULD YOU HAVE FOR-GIVEN HIM...
...WOULD YOU HAVE LET IT BE IF HE HAD CONFIDED IN YOU!?

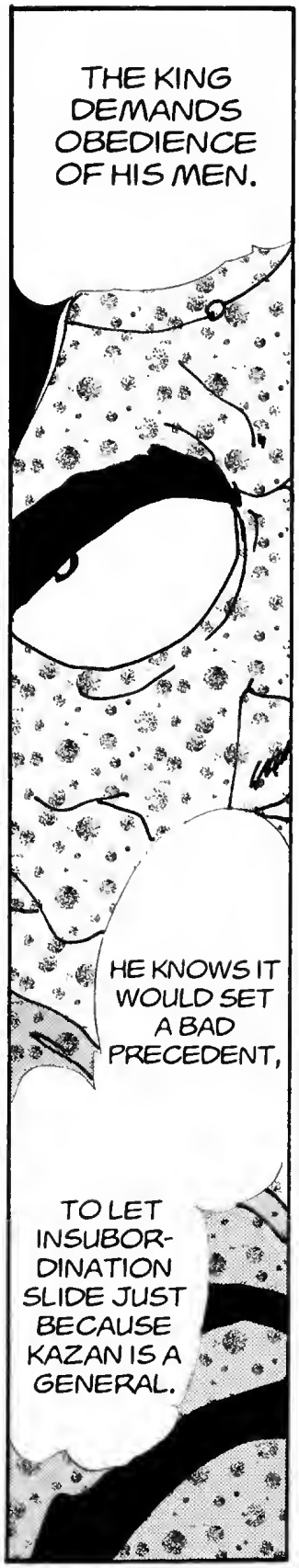

HE COULD HAVE CONFIDED IN ME!
HE HID THE TRUTH FROM HIS LIEGE!

NO.
I GAVE HIM CHANCES TO COME CLEAN!
KTA KTA KTA

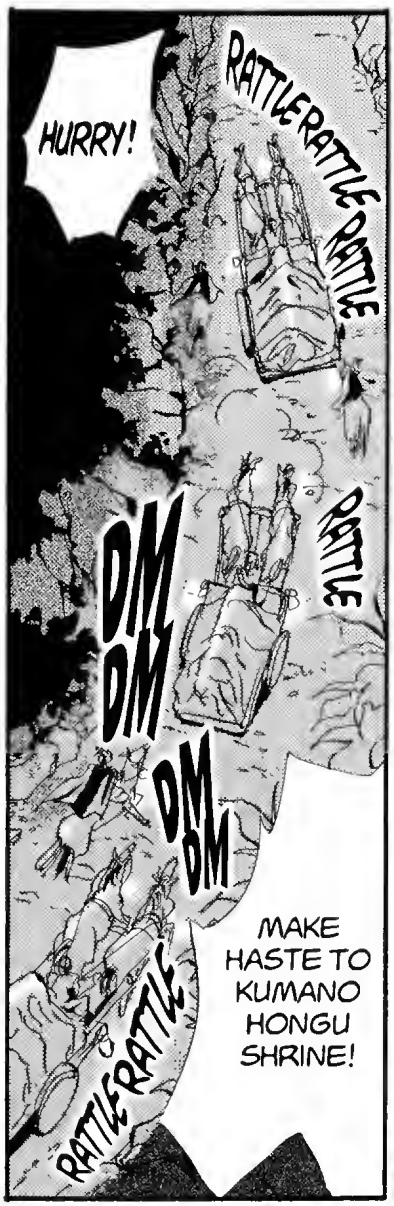


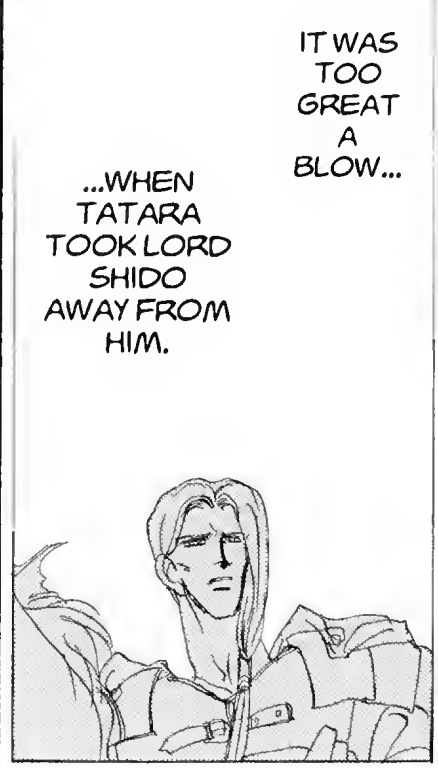
HE SHELTERED THE WOMAN WHO BROUGHT TATARA INTO THIS WORLD!
OF COURSE NOT!

LORD ASHO...

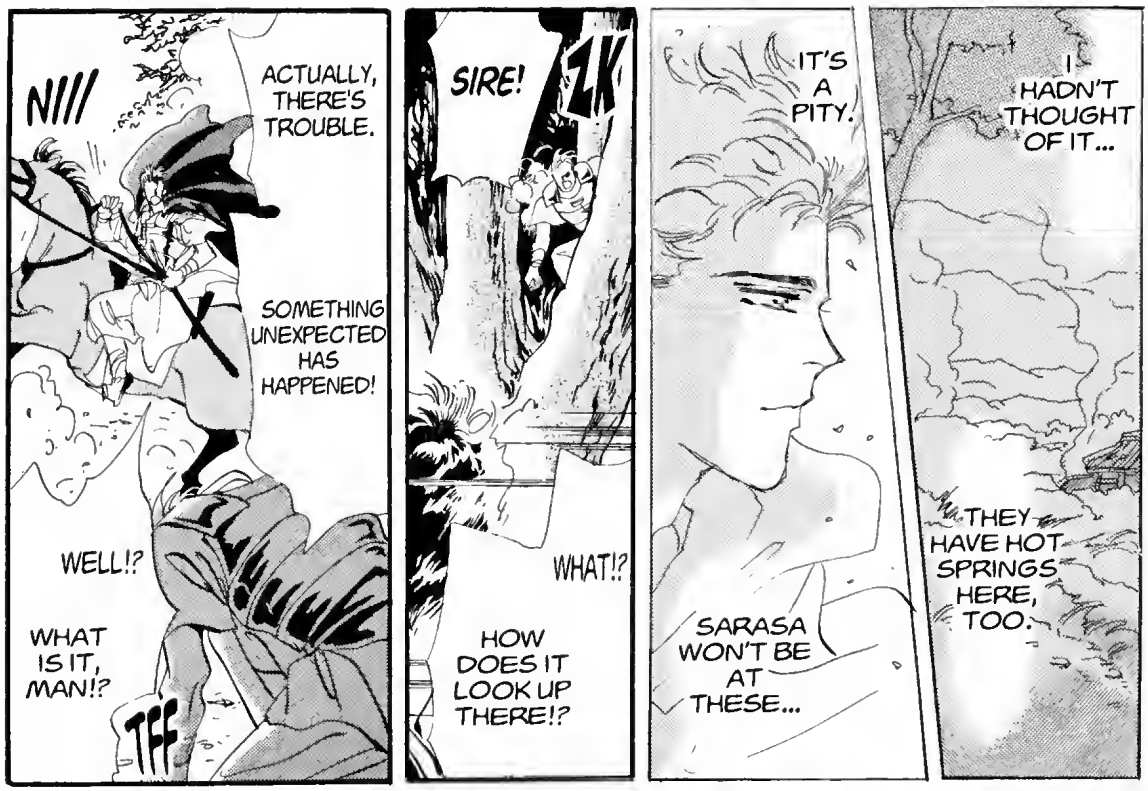

THE KING DEMANDS OBEDIENCE OF HIS MEN.
HE KNOWS IT WOULD SET A BAD PRECEDENT,
TO LET INSUBORDINATION SLIDE JUST BECAUSE KAZAN IS A GENERAL.

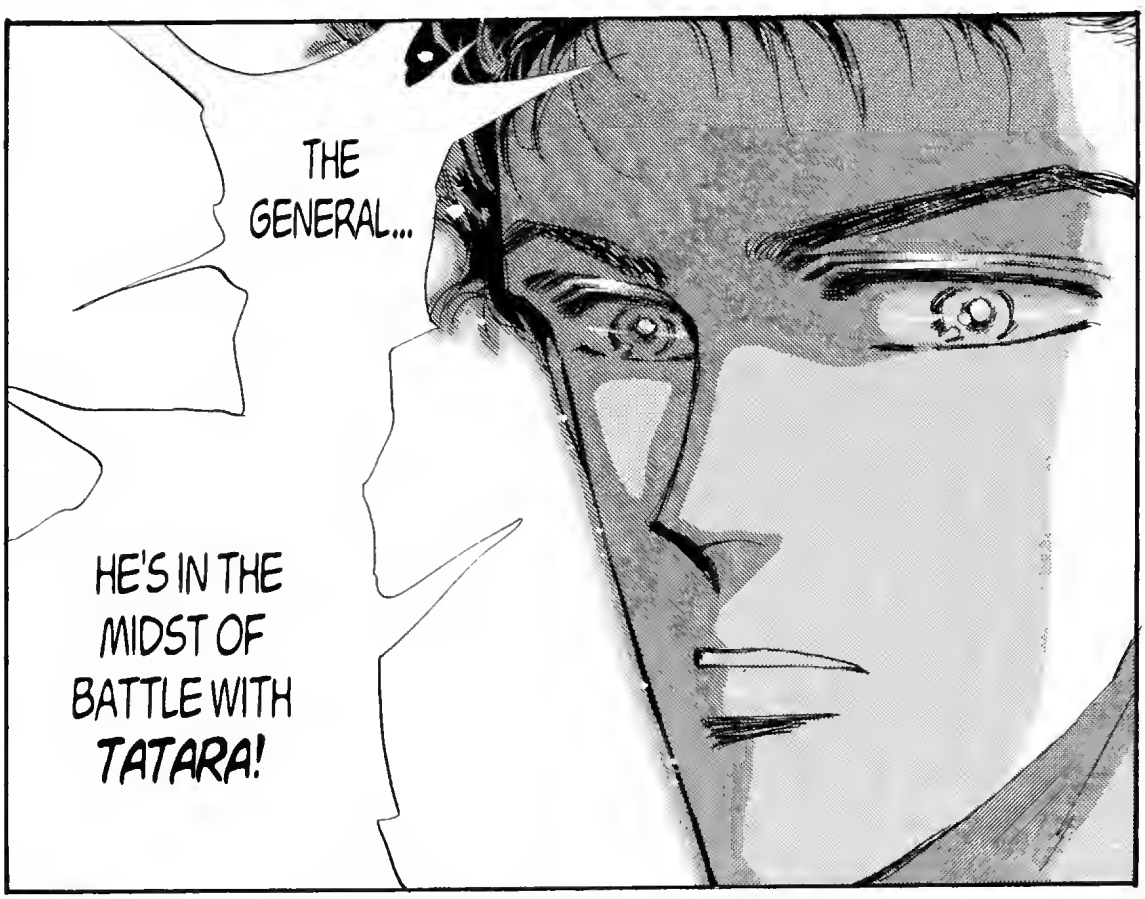
DM DM DM
ENOUGH FROM YOU!
STAY BEHIND!
SIRE!


HURRY!
RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE
RATTLE
DM DM DM DM
RATTLE RATTLE
MAKE HASTE TO KUMANO HONGU SHRINE!


IT WAS TOO GREAT A BLOW...
...WHEN TATARA TOOK LORD SHIDO AWAY FROM HIM.

KLOP KLOP
I DON'T RECOMMEND BEING SO FORWARD, LORD SAKAKI.
LORD ASHO!

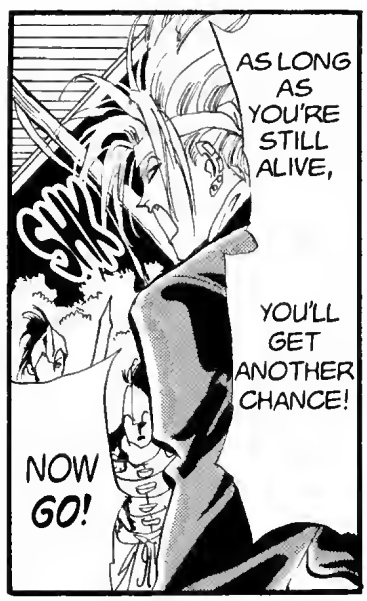

NIII
ACTUALLY, THERE'S TROUBLE.
SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAS HAPPENED!
WELL!?
WHAT IS IT, MAN!?
TFF
SIRE!
ZK
WHAT!?
HOW DOES IT LOOK UP THERE!?
IT'S A PITY.
SARASA WON'T BE AT THESE...
I HADN'T THOUGHT OF IT...
THEY HAVE HOT SPRINGS HERE, TOO.


THE GENERAL...
HE'S IN THE MIDST OF BATTLE WITH TATARA!

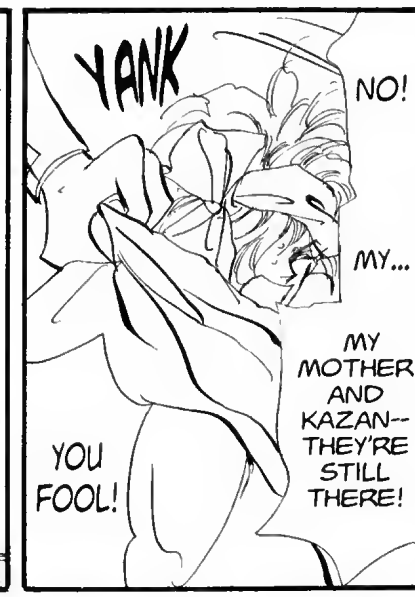
RR
RA
AA
AA
AA
GM
P
ALL I DID...
WAS PUT THE OTHERS IN DANGER!
ALL I DID...
I COULDN'T SAVE MY MOTHER!
I COULDN'T GET TO THE GENERAL!
HOW COULD THIS BE!?
CHACHA!
I CAN'T TELL WHICH WAY I'M FACING!
HOW...
YAA!
THE BATTLE'S SWEEPING ME LIKE A CURRENT--
YAA!
TMP TMP TMP
CHACHA!
BAM
HAYATO!
WHERE ARE YOU!?

I'VE GOT HIM!
IT'S TATARA!
TATARA!
MOM!

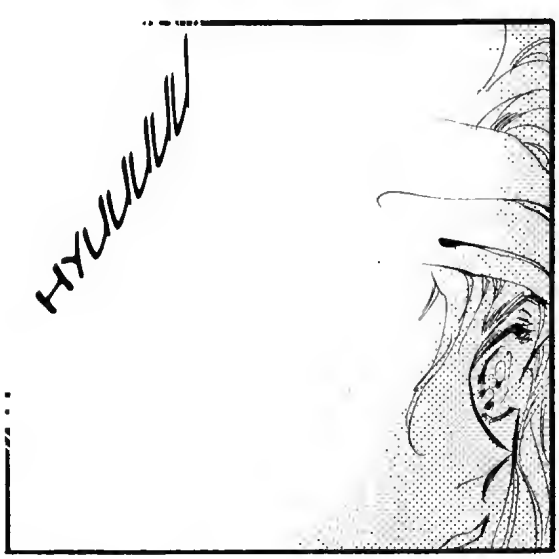
GAH!
DMF
TATARA!
WE'LL HOLD 'EM BACK!
THE TENGU FACTION-- AT YOUR SERVICE!
SO GET YOURSELVES OUTTA HERE!


AS LONG AS YOU'RE STILL ALIVE,
SHK
YOU'LL GET ANOTHER CHANCE!
NOW GO!

DON'T YOU GET IT!?
THE PLAN FAILED!
WHEN THE PLAN FAILS, YOU RETREAT!


YANK
NO!
MY...
MY MOTHER AND KAZAN-- THEY'RE STILL THERE!
YOU FOOL!

AFTER ALL, I'VE TRIED MY HAND ON OL' WHITE TAIL HUNDREDS OF TIMES!
LISTEN TO ME, LAD.
I KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING.

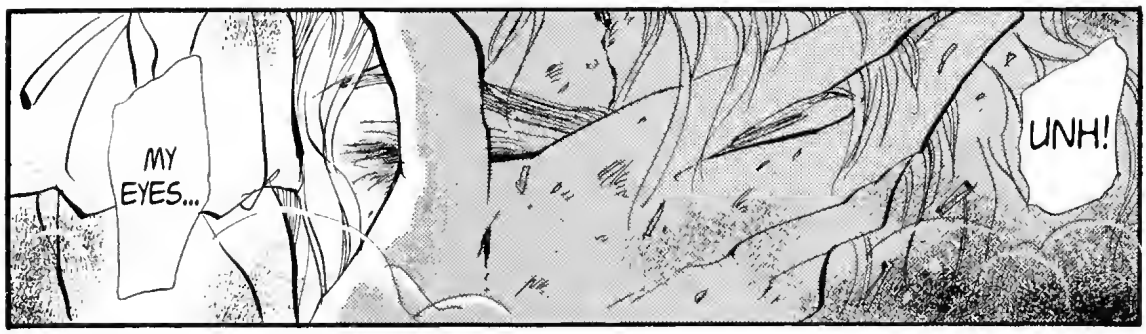

HYUUUUU

ZAKI!
YOU LOOK FOR CHACHA...

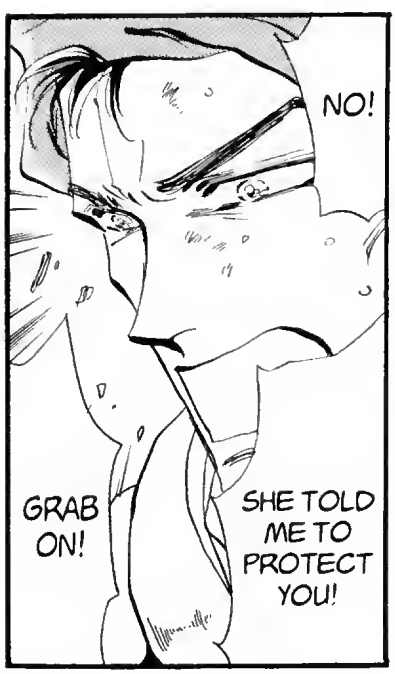
NACHI...
HE'S RIGHT! COME ON, TATARA!

DOOM
GET DOWN!
CANNON-BALLS!?
ZAKI!
!!

DOOM
ARE YOU HURT!?
YOU IDIOT! WHY SAVE ME!?
DOOM
CREAK
POP HSS
HYUUUUU
TATARA!


MY EYES...
UNH!

THEY HURT...

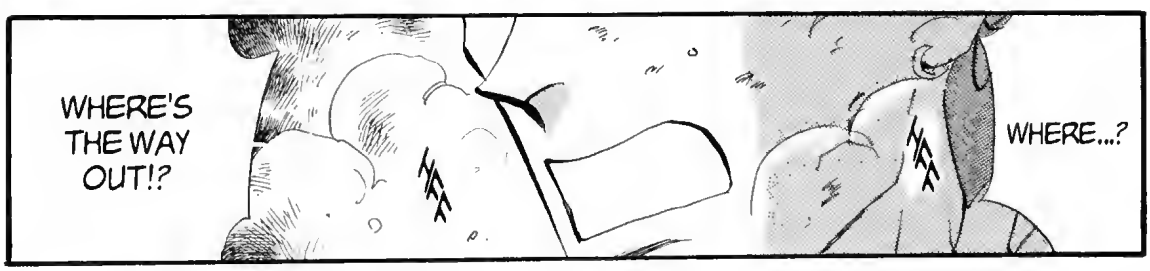

NO!
GRAB ON!
SHE TOLD ME TO PROTECT YOU!

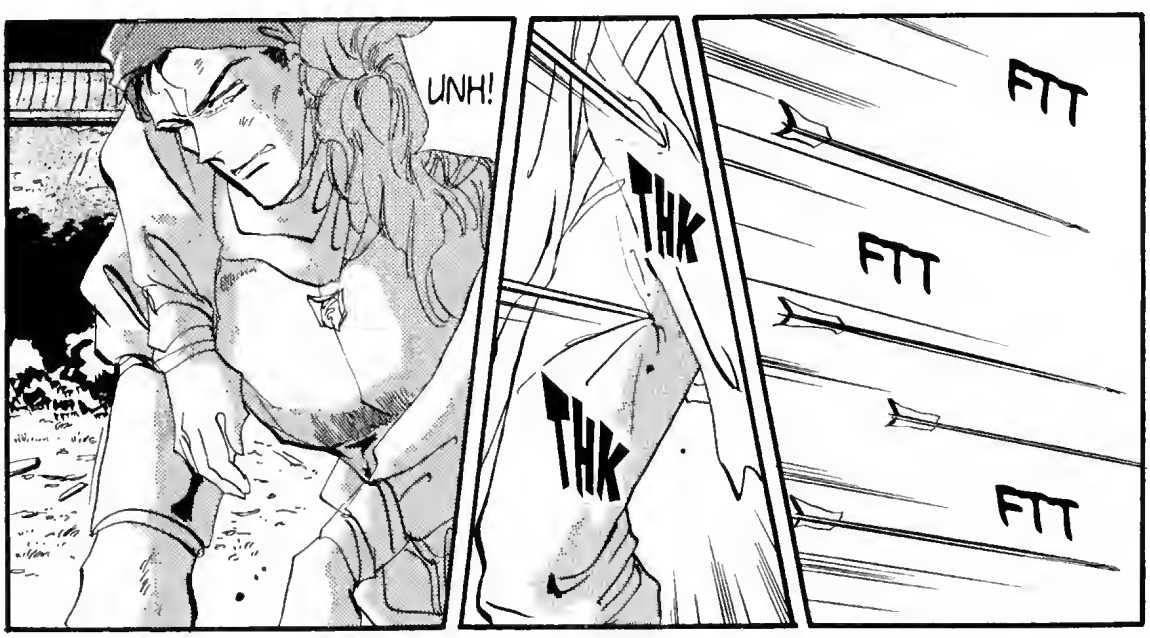
ZAKI!
HURRY!
GO TO CHACHA...

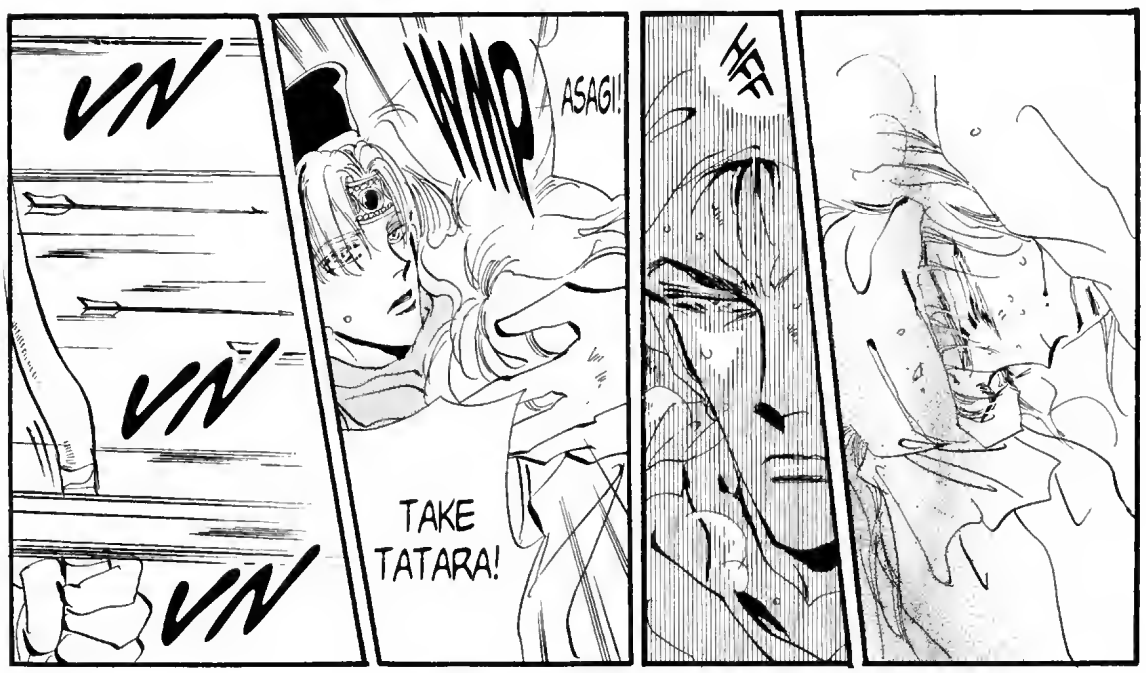
DAMN!
BOM
GAH!
WHOA!
WHERE'S THIS SHOOTIN' COMIN' FROM!?

FOOM
OH, NO!
DON'T RUB THEM!
WE HAVE TO GET THEM LOOKED AT!

WHERE ARE THEY FIRING FROM!?
GYAAA!
WAA!
WHO'S DOING THIS!?
DOOM
WAAH!
DOOM
HFF
HFF


WHERE'S THE WAY OUT!?
HFF
HFF
WHERE...?


UNH!
THK
THK
FTT
FTT
FTT


VN
VN
VN
WHP
ASAGI!
TAKE TATARA!

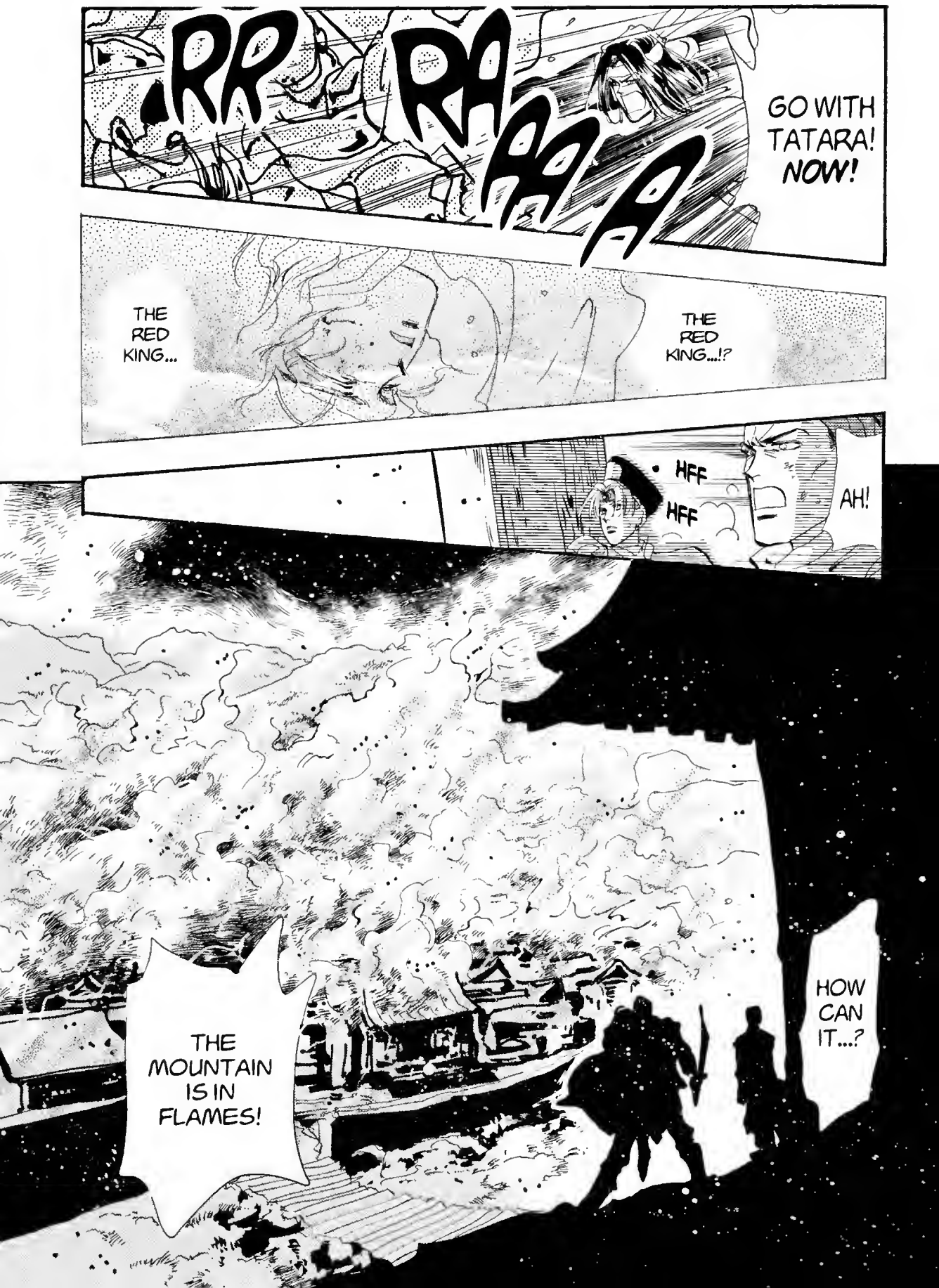
RR
RA
AA
CHACHA!
ZH
AA

KAAH!
TK
KRK
KK
KK
BKK
KRK
REMEM-BER...
THE LAND OF KI...
...IS THE BIRTHPLACE OF BATTO-JUTSU--THE ART OF THE SWORD.

THIS IS THE LAND OF KI!

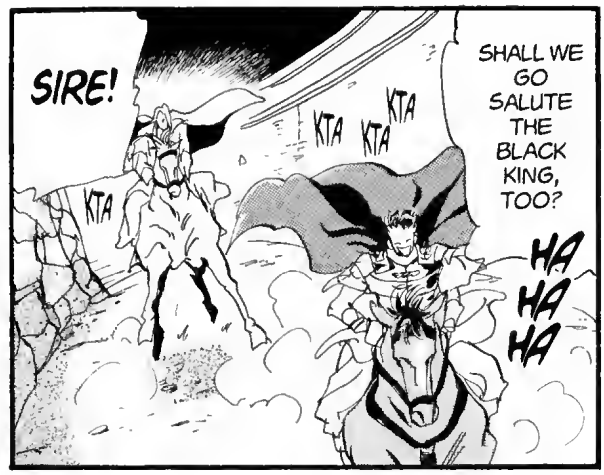
IT'S ALSO THE BIRTHPLACE--

OF THE WARRIOR BENKEI MUSASHIBO!


RR RA AA A
GO WITH TATARA! NOW!
THE RED KING...
THE RED KING...!?
HFF HFF
AH!
THE MOUNTAIN IS IN FLAMES!
HOW CAN IT...?

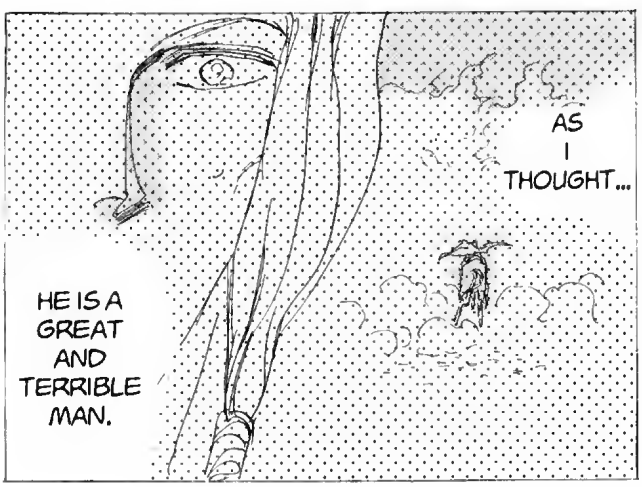
DOOOM
DOOM
FIRE AT WILL!
DOOOOM
FIRE!
HE'S PUSHING HIS LUCK...
YOU CALL THIS A PRIVATE DISPUTE!?
BUT HELP FROM YOU WON'T BE NECESSARY!
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
HA-HA-HA
DOES HE PLAN TO BURN KUMANO DOWN!?
I'VE ONLY COME TO PUNISH A GROUP OF MY MEN WHO DISOBEYED ME!
IT'S JUST A PRIVATE LITTLE DISPUTE!
SOME SPARKS MAY FLY YOUR WAY...
FROM HIS UNWORTHY SON-- THE RED KING!
I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE OLD MAN!
WE CAN NOT!
THESE ARE KING UKON'S LODGINGS!
I KNOW!
OPEN UP!
DM DM
OPEN THE GATES!
DM DM

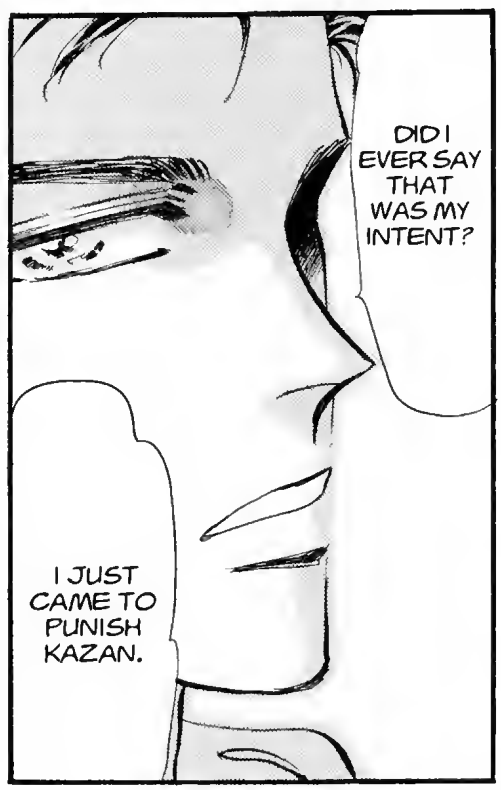
THIS LAND IS UNDER KING UKON'S CARE. IT DOES EXTENSIVE BUSINESS IN THE NAME OF THE GODS.
AS PART OF KING UKON'S TREASURY, AND NOW THE BREEDING GROUND OF SOLDIER-MONKS, IT CARRIES IMMENSE POLITICAL CLOUT.


SIRE!
KTA
KTA
KTA
KTA
SHALL WE GO SALUTE THE BLACK KING, TOO?
HA HA HA

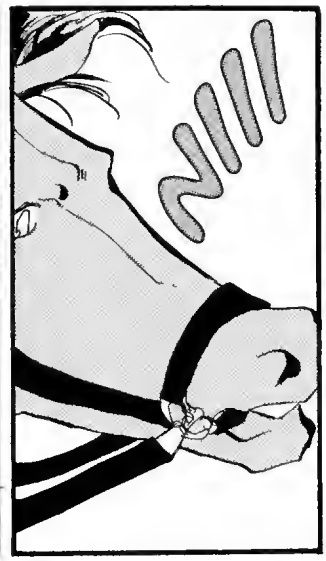
WAS IT YOUR PLAN TO BURN KUMANO ALL ALONG?
WAS SUBDUING GENERAL KAZAN ONLY AN EXCUSE?

I CAN'T BE HELD RESPONSIBLE IF THE FIRE SPREADS. PERHAPS THE GREAT SHRINE WILL BURN AS WELL!
HAHAHA
BUT.
KTA KTA KTA

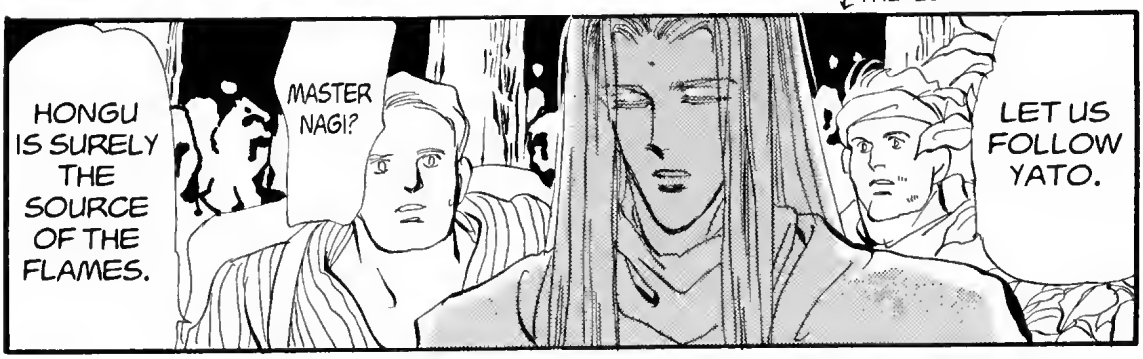

AS I THOUGHT...
HE IS A GREAT AND TERRIBLE MAN.

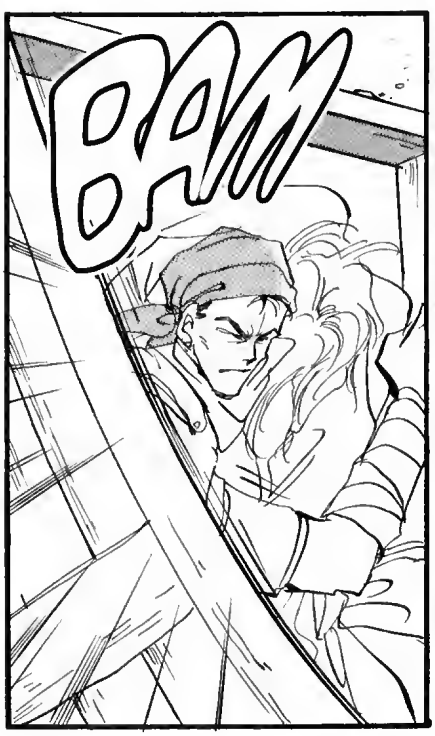

DID I EVER SAY THAT WAS MY INTENT?
I JUST CAME TO PUNISH KAZAN.

KTA!
HEY!
STOP!
YATO!



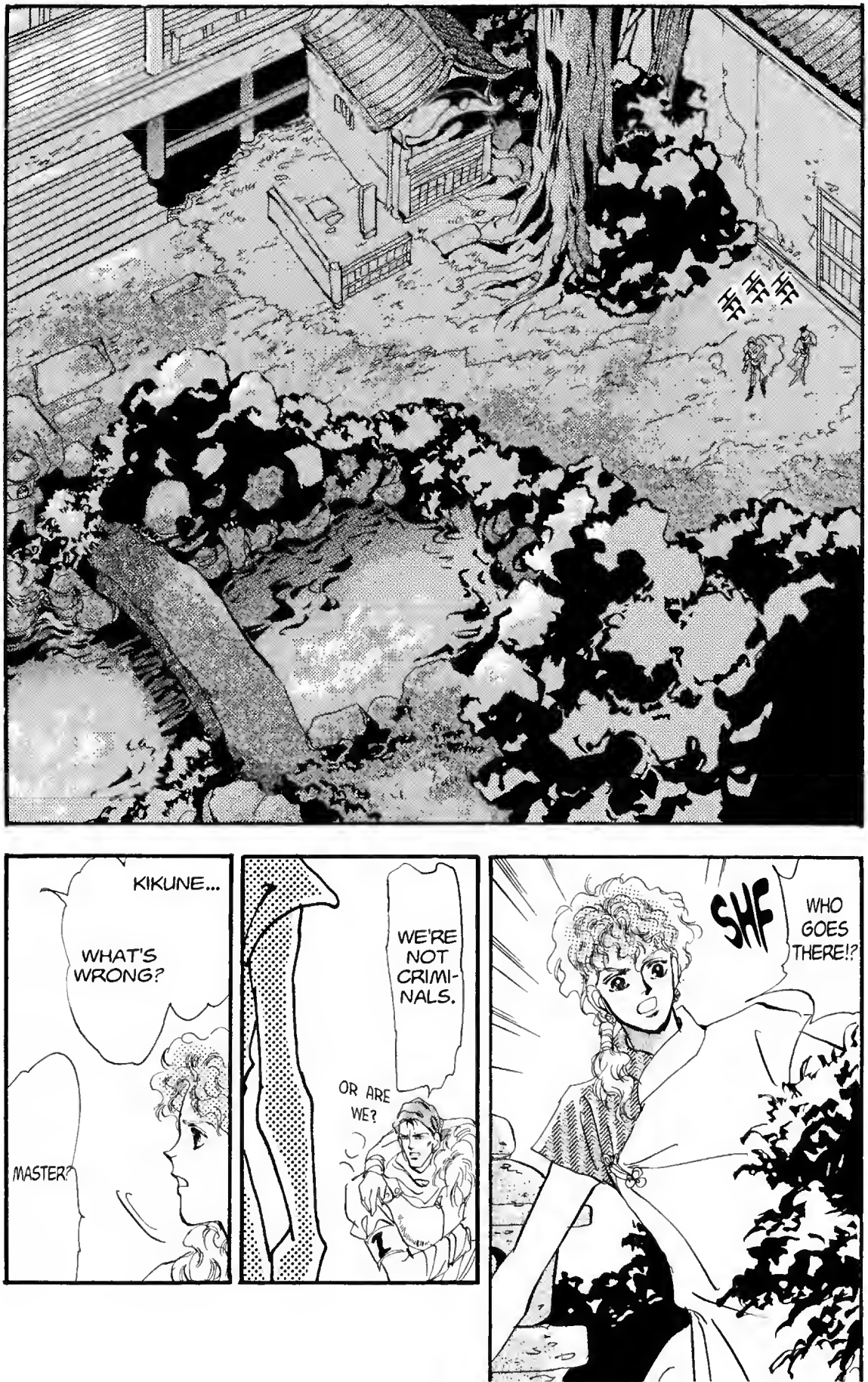
MASTER NAGI!
THE SUMMIT'S ON FIRE! IT'S SPREADING!


THE LOST ONES.
HONGU IS SURELY THE SOURCE OF THE FLAMES.
MASTER NAGI?
LET US FOLLOW YATO.


BAM

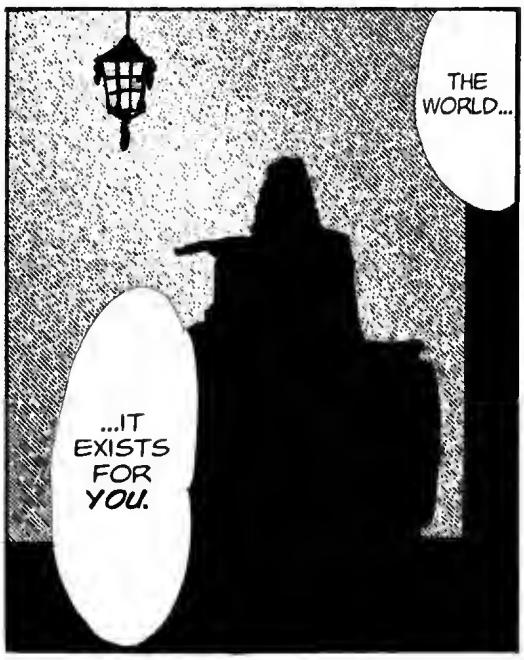
WHERE DID TATARA GO!?
WAA! YAA!
LET'S HIDE IN THERE!
THAT WAY! IN THE ALLEY!

HOOSH
KRSH


SHF
WHO GOES THERE!?
WE'RE NOT CRIMI-NALS.
OR ARE WE?
KIKUNE...
WHAT'S WRONG?
MASTER?

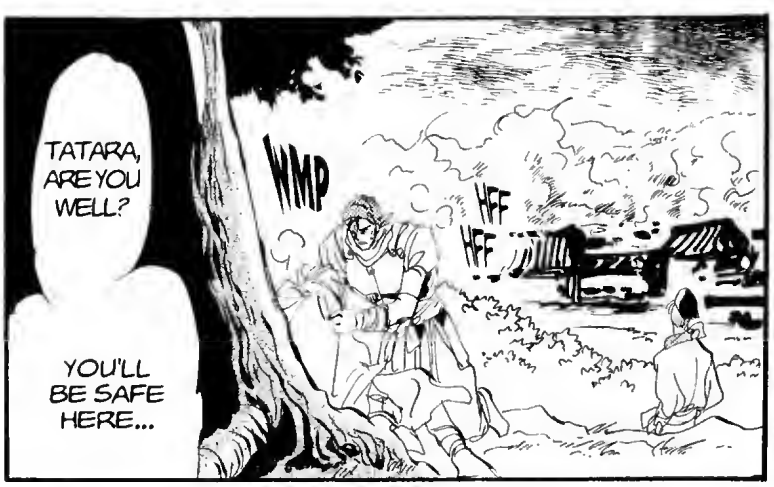
MAY I HELP YOU?
KREAK
FORGIVE US FOR INTRUDING.
WE WERE JUST TRYING TO PASS THROUGH.
AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M TRANSPORTING THE INJURED.
KIKUNE.
SHOW THEM TO THE BACK DOOR.
Y-YES, MA'AM.

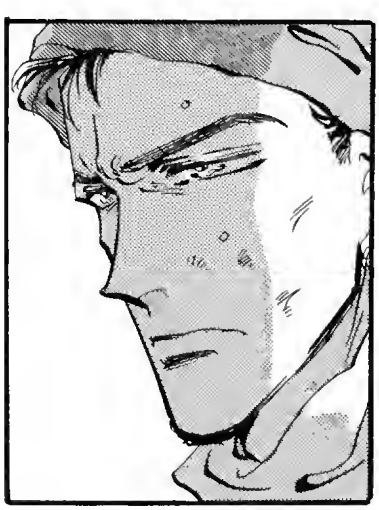
OOF.
EXCUSE US.
BOW
THAT WAS TATARA?
HE WAS A CUTE BOY.
ASAGI.
...YES
...WHITE KING.
OR RATHER...
WHITE LADY.


THE WORLD...
...IT EXISTS FOR YOU.

ME?
JOIN THEM?
IT'S ALL GOING SMOOTHLY.

WILL MY PRECIOUS ASAGI DO WELL?
THERE'S NO DANGER...
THAT YOU'LL GO OUT FOR WOOL AND COME BACK SHORN, IS THERE?

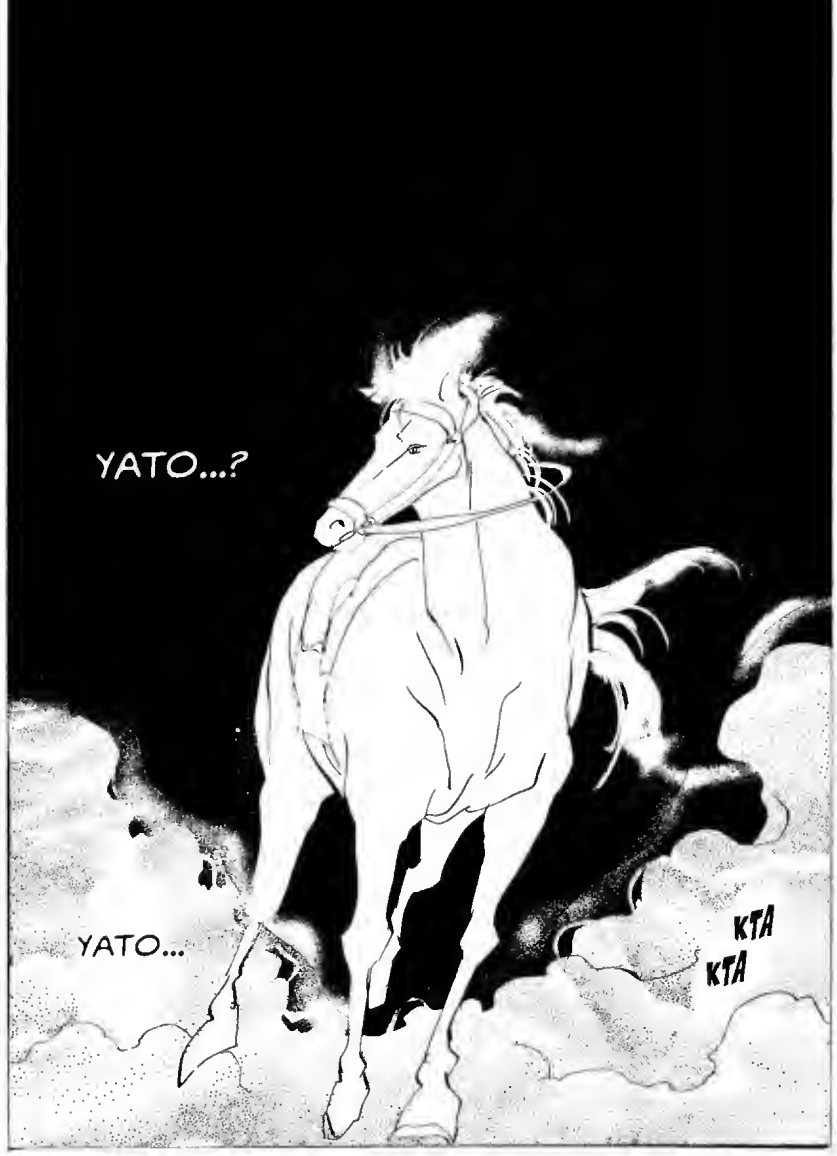

TATARA, ARE YOU WELL?
YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE...
HMP
HFF HFF

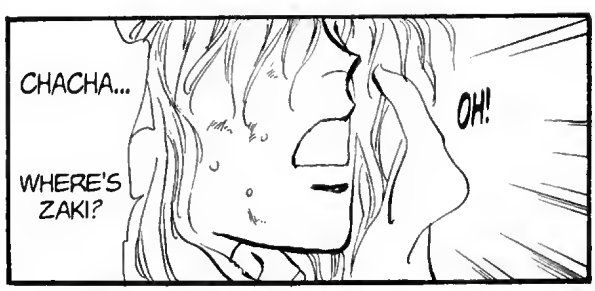


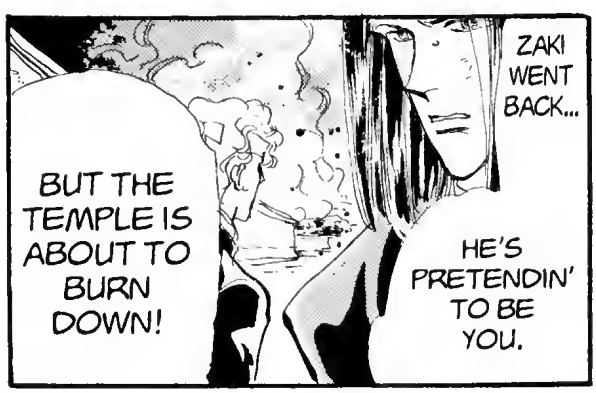
WHERE'S TATARA?
PESKY FOOLS.
HE WENT THAT WAY!

OVER HERE!
I'VE FOUND TATARA!
LOOK AFTER HIM, ASAGI.
SHF
TUG
I NEED TO BORROW THIS, TATARA.
THERE HE GOES! AFTER HIM!
IT'S HIM!
KRAKL
...THEY'RE BURNING.
MY EYES...
IT'S SO HOT...
SHURI...
...HELP ME!
KTA KTA

YATO...
HFF
PEEP!


YATO...?
YATO...
KTA
KTA


CHACHA...
WHERE'S ZAKI?
OH!


ZAKI WENT BACK...
BUT THE TEMPLE IS ABOUT TO BURN DOWN!
HE'S PRETENDIN' TO BE YOU.

A DOCTOR...?
WHERE IS EVERYONE?

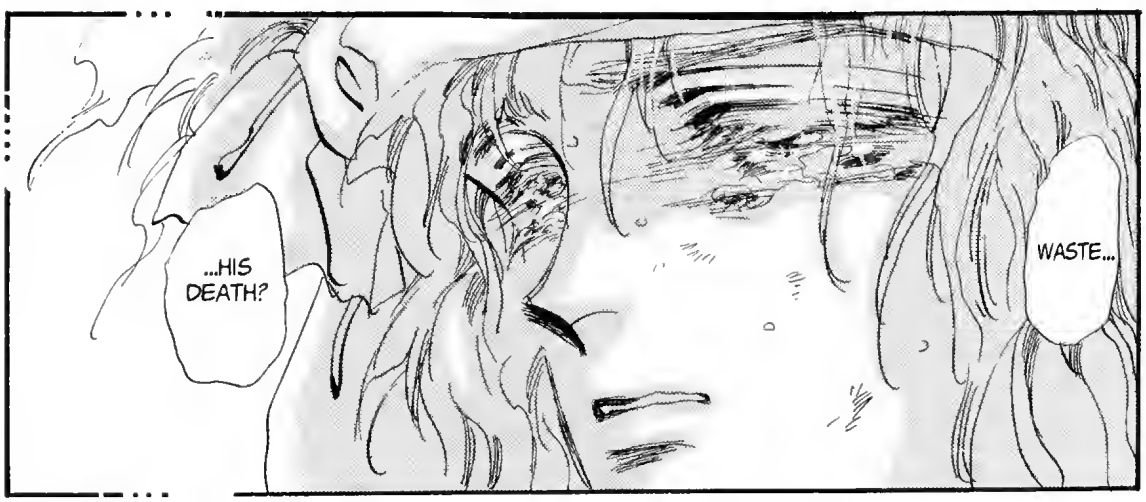
YOU AWAKE?
I HURT ALL OVER...
YOU OKAY?
KEEP YOUR EYES SHUT.
I'LL TAKE YOU TO A DOCTOR.

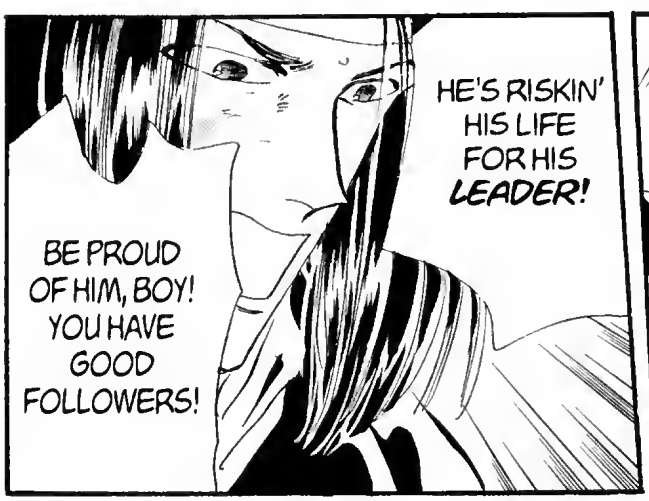
YOU CAN'T WASTE HIS DEATH!
YOU'VE GOT TO GO TO A DOCTOR!

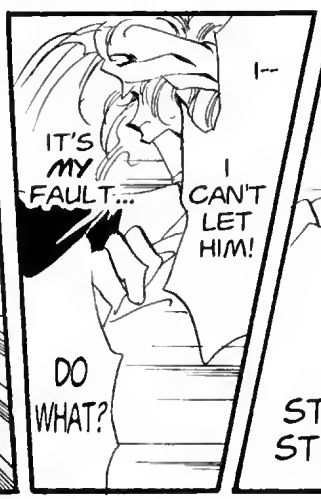
HE LEFT SO HE COULD SPARE YOU!
HE WASN'T PLANNIN' ON GETTIN' YOUR HELP!

FOOL!
OWW!
YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO DO ANYTHING!

HE WENT BACK TO SAVE CHACHA!
HSST
I HAVE TO GO!


...HIS DEATH?
WASTE...


HE'S RISKIN' HIS LIFE FOR HIS LEADER!
BE PROUD OF HIM, BOY! YOU HAVE GOOD FOLLOWERS!


I--
IT'S MY FAULT...
I CAN'T LET HIM!
DO WHAT?

NO!
IT WAS ME.
"NO," WHAT?
STAY STILL!

...BE ANYONE...
HOW COULD THERE EVER...
IT'S BECAUSE... I WAS TOO WEAK.
...WORTH SACRIFICING A LIFE FOR!?
HOW COULD THERE BE?

HOW...?
YATO!
KTA KTA
KTA KTA
YATO!

LEAVE 'EM BE, AND YOU'LL BE BLIND!
KA KA
WE'VE GOT TO TAKE CARE O' THOSE EYES!
TATARA!
STOP!
YOU FOOL!
YOU...
KRAK
KRAK
KLANG
HFF
HFF

ZAKI...

...OH, GOOD.

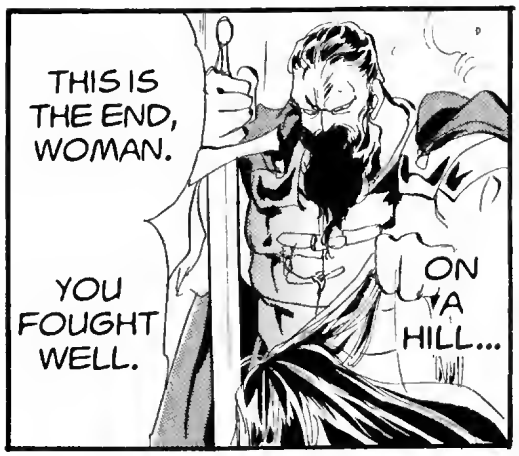
IS TATARA SAFE?

...TRIED TO DO MY BEST, TOO, BUT...

I...

YOU KNOW WHAT?

ZAKI...



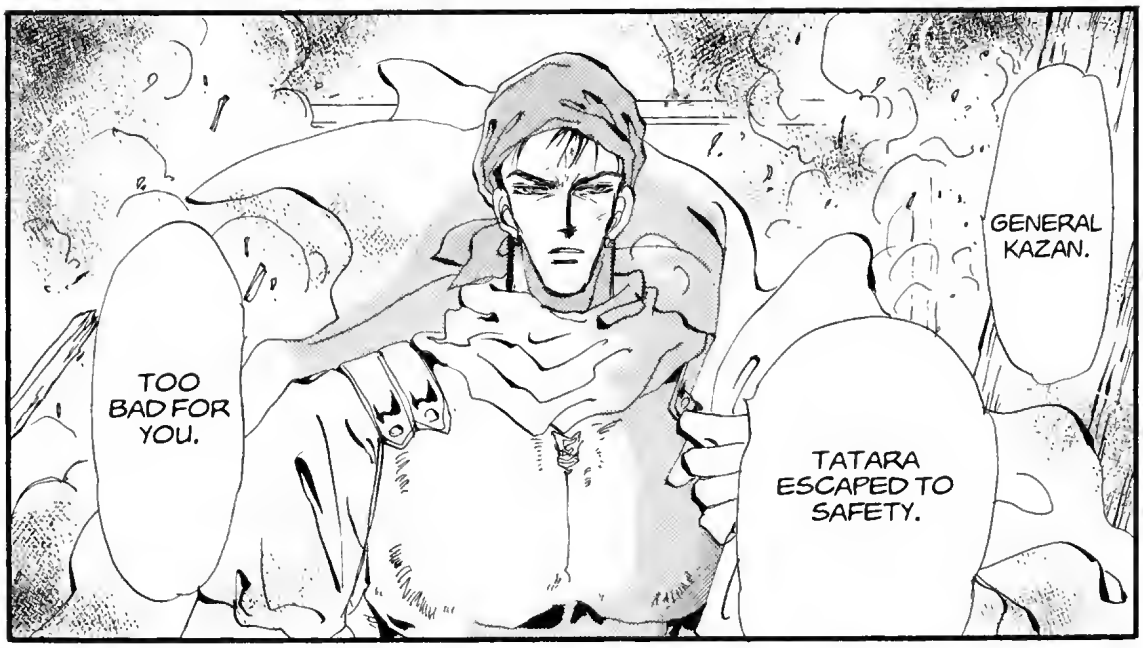
BUT LOOK AT ME NOW.

I'D DIE ON THE OPEN OCEAN.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT...

CHF

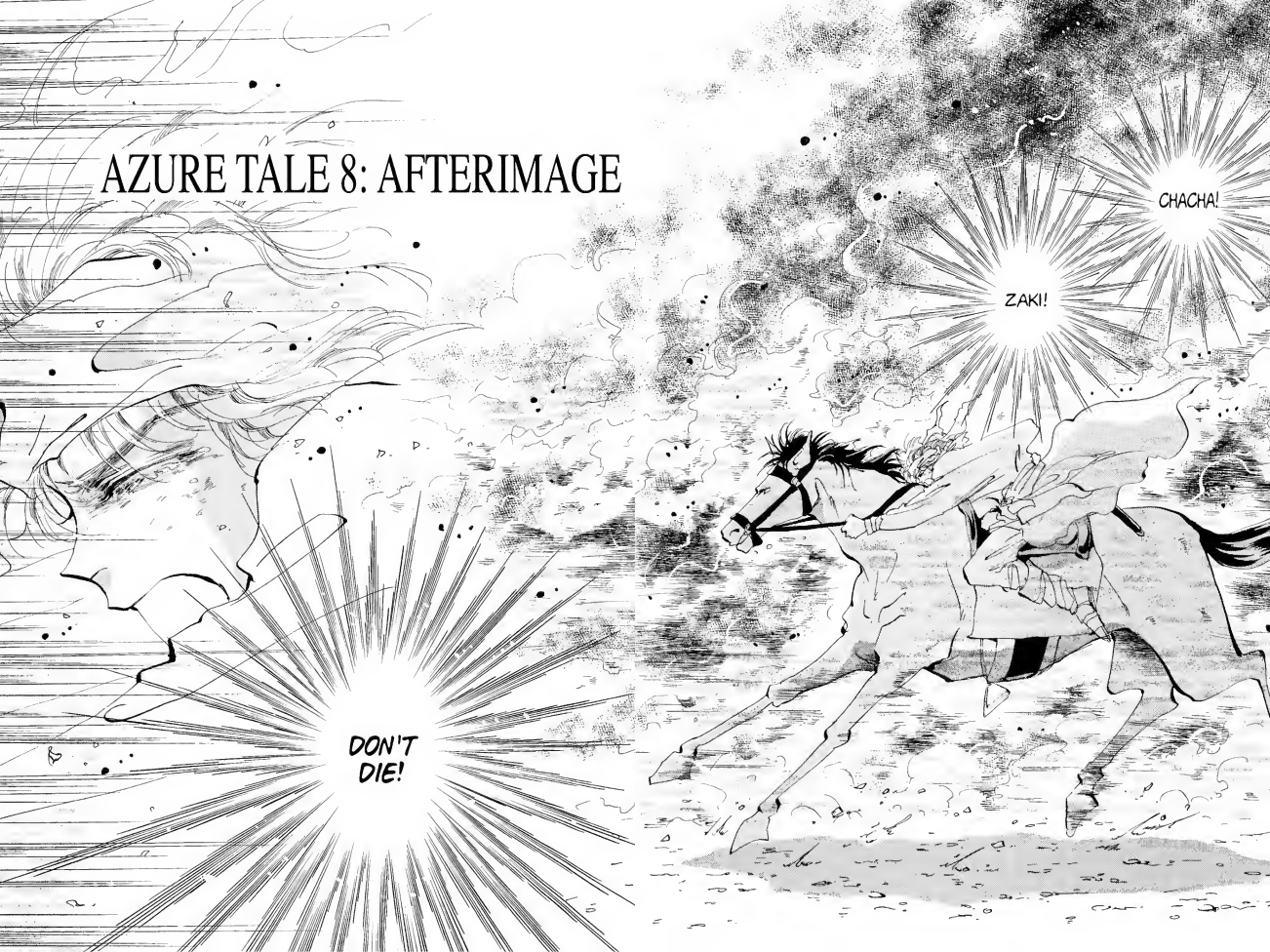
ZAKI!
KTA KTA KTA KTA
CHACHA!
DON'T DIE!
PLEASE, DON'T DIE!
DON'T DIE!


GENERAL KAZAN.
TOO BAD FOR YOU.
TATARA ESCAPED TO SAFETY.

I'LL HAVE TO MAKE UP FOR IT...
...IN THAT CASE...
BY TAKING YOU TWO WITH ME.

ZAKI...

AZURE TALE 8: AFTERIMAGE

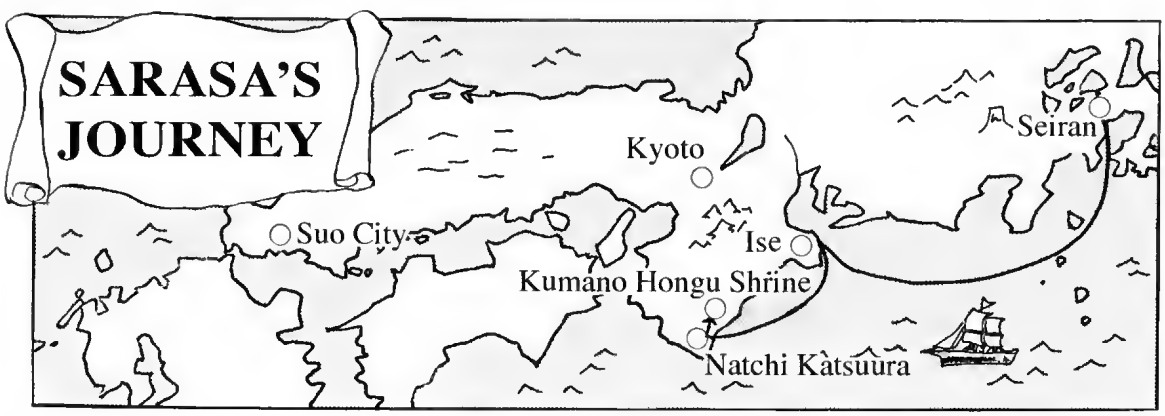


PEOPLE DON'T COME WORSHIPPING YOU AS THE SAVIOR.
THEY DON'T COME TOGETHER UNDER YOU LOOKING FOR GUIDANCE...

AYE, BUT...
I THINK I'M STARTING TO UNDERSTAND, TATARA.

DM DM DM
I'VE NEVER SEEN A LEADER WHO NEEDED SO MUCH BABYSITTING!
HE'S NEVER BEEN VERY CONSCIOUS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LEADER.

TINY TAM-TAM TIME 4
I usually put my blade in the pen stand like this.
Which means...
ACK!
STAB
I often stab myself.
It hurts so much just getting a small cut from a blade. I feel so sorry for Sarasa & Co. —they have to fight with swords!
SOB
Everyone, please live in peace!
I've learned my lesson.
ERASER
Now it's in the pen stand like this.
TAMU.


SARASA'S JOURNEY
Kyoto
Seiran
Suo City
Ise
Kumano Hongu Shrine
Natchi Katsuura

WHAT'S HAPPENING!?

DM DM DM DM

THEY CAN'T BEAR JUST TO STAND BACK AND WATCH...

...AS YOU RUN AHEAD ON UNSTEADY FEET, BAWLING YOUR EYES OUT.

WHO GOES THERE!?

KTA KTA

BUT LET HIM DO WHAT HE WANTS--

UNTIL HE'S HAD ENOUGH!

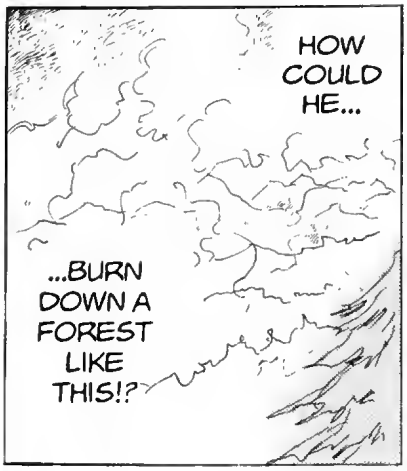
TMM MM

HO! LISTEN!

KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON HIM.

NAGI'S TREE...
NAGI'S TREE...
KTA KTA KTA KTA
MY EYES HURT...
RUB RUB
EVERY-THING'S FOGGY...
IT'S ALL RED...
...IT'S BURNING.
THE RED KING...

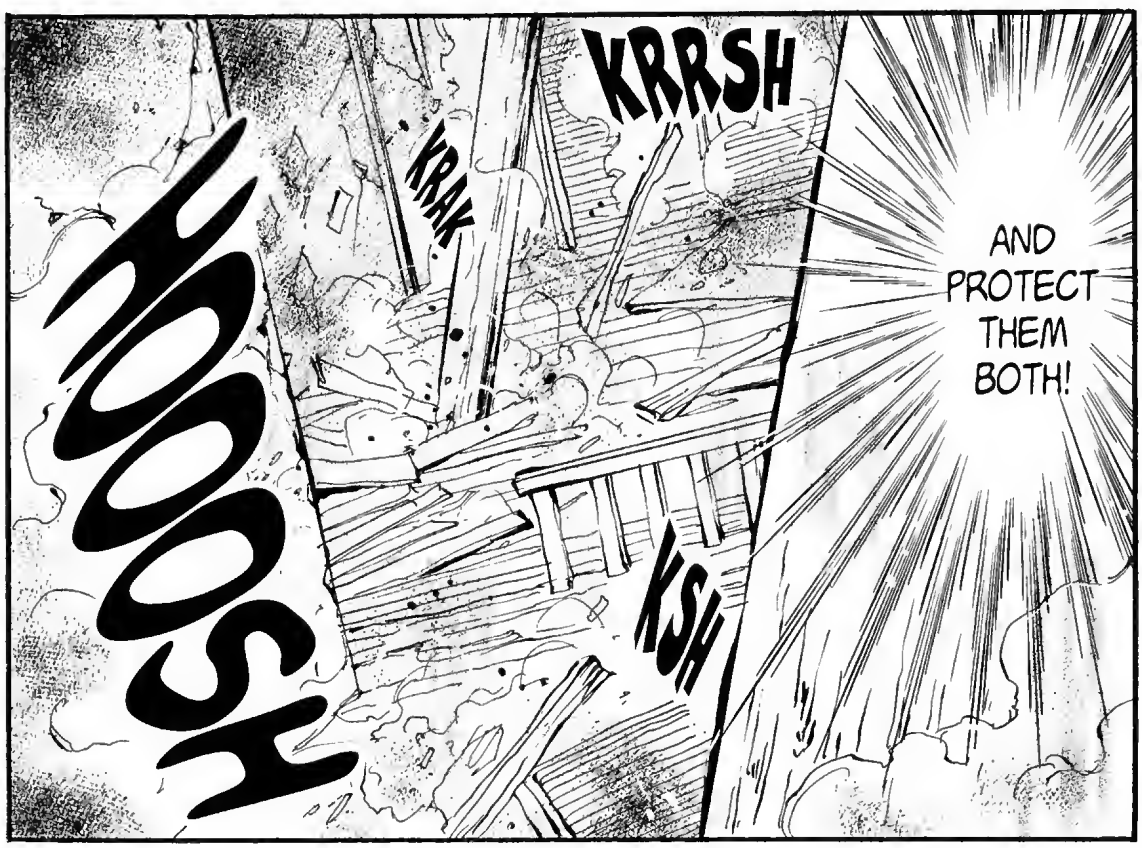
HE IS A DEMON.


HOW COULD HE...
...BURN DOWN A FOREST LIKE THIS!?

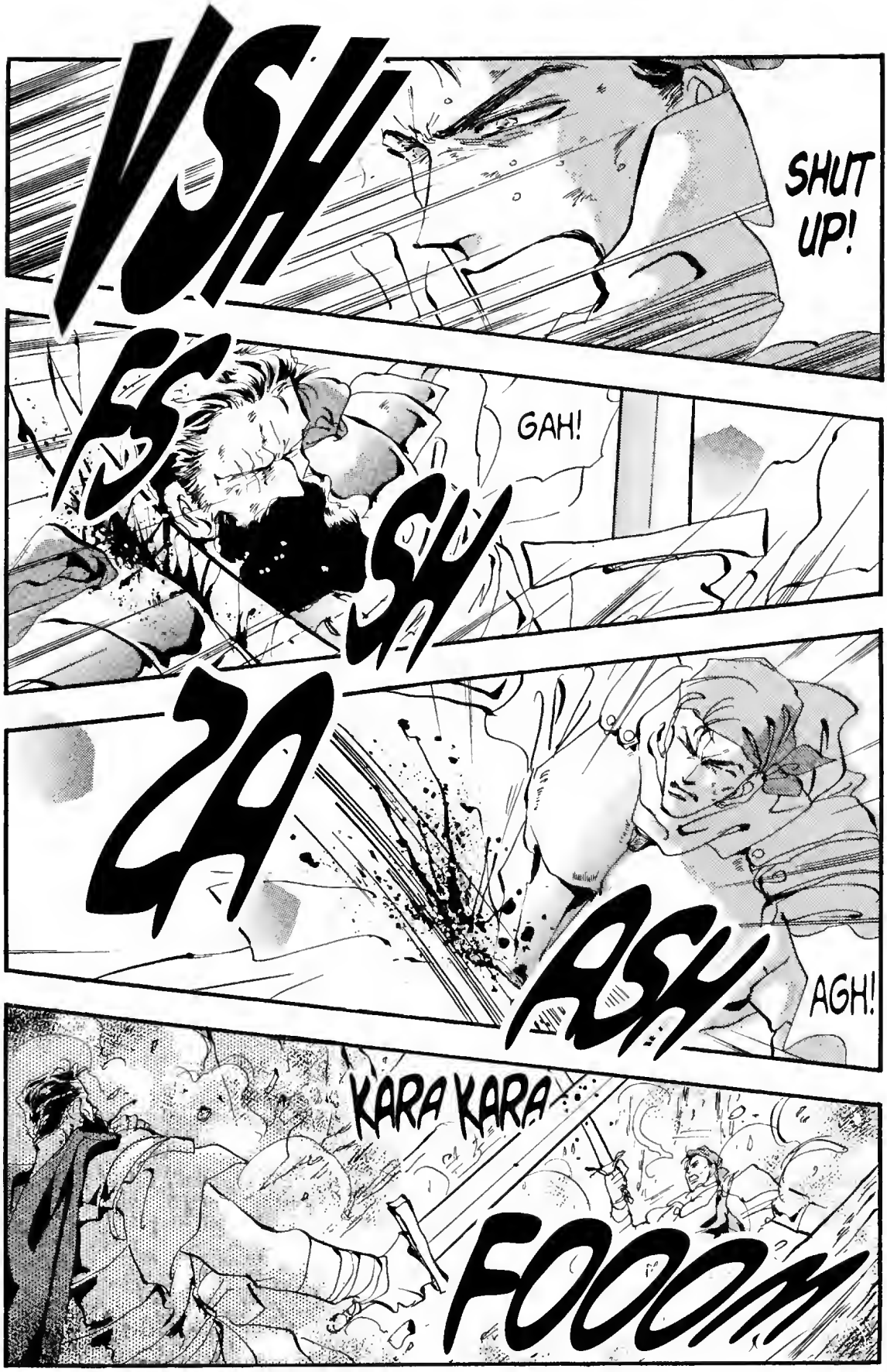
...RULES OVER A DESERT LAND.
HE KNOWS HOW PRECIOUS PLANTS ARE.

I WON'T LET YOU KILL ANYMORE!
HE'S THE DEMON OF DEATH!

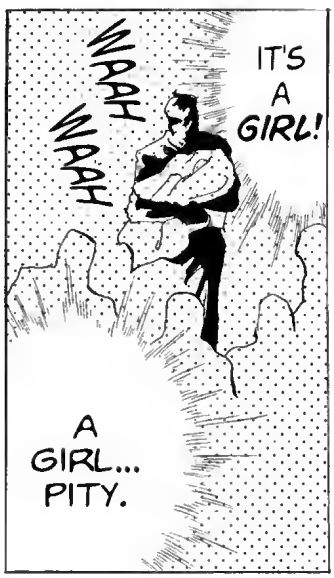
GIVE ME THE LAST OF YOUR STRENGTH!
NAGI'S TREE!

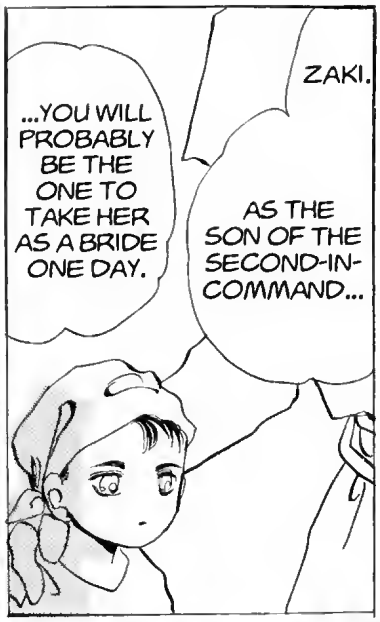

KRRSH
KRAK
KSH
HSSSSH
AND PROTECT THEM BOTH!

KA-SHNK
CHACHA!
YOU HAVE TO ESCAPE!
THIS TEMPLE WON'T LAST!
KING
KANG
SKRRK
GET UP!
CHACHA!
IT'S NO USE.
SHE'S ABOUT TO SAIL FOR THE OTHER WORLD...

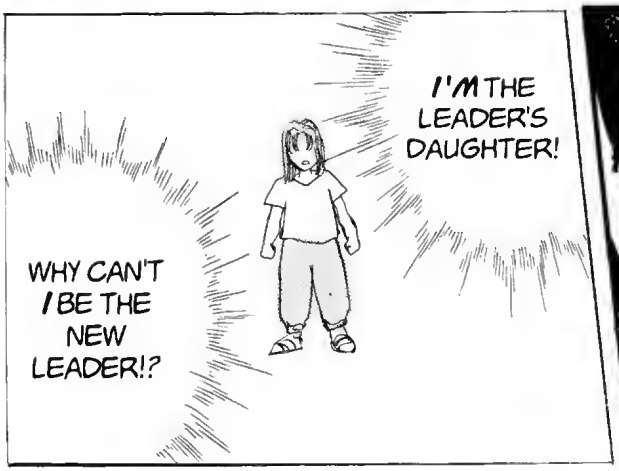

VSH
SHUT UP!
SS
GAH!
SH
ZA
ASH
AGH!
KARA KARA
FOOOM

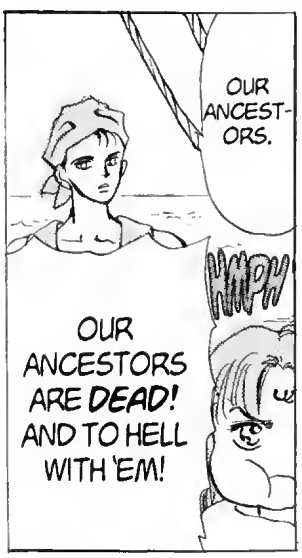
B-BM
B-BM
B-BM
B-BM
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP

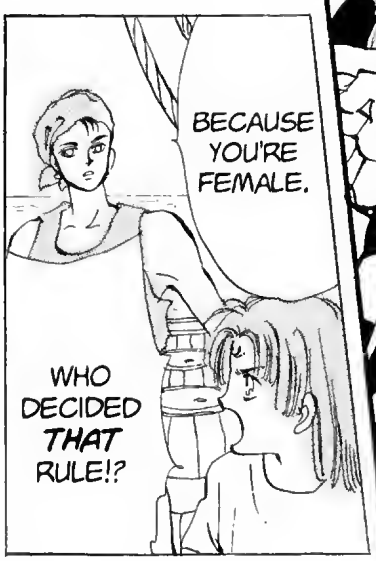




CHACHA'S GROUP WERE ONCE PIRATES.

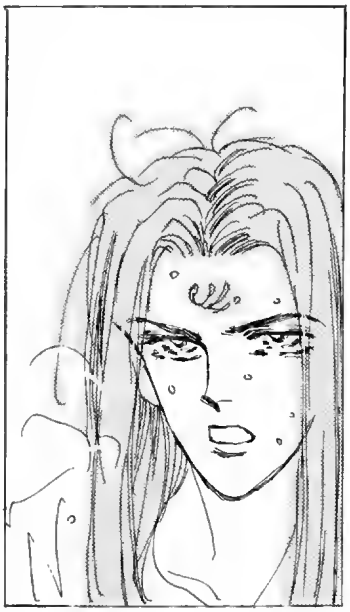




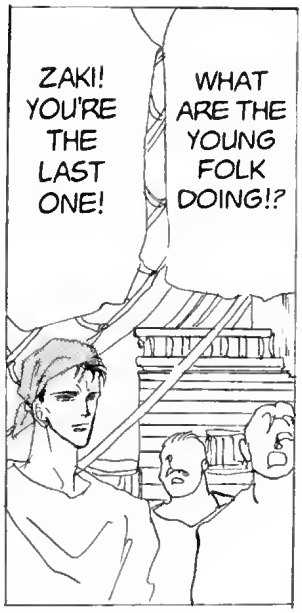


IF I BECOME STRONG ENOUGH...
WILL THEY ACCEPT ME AS THEIR LEADER!?
KANG
SKRRK
KANG
I'LL DO EVERY-THING THE MEN DO!
I'LL BE STRONGER THAN ANY MAN!
I'LL BE THE STRONG-EST LEADER THEY'VE EVER HAD!
THEN NO ONE WILL COMPLAIN!
RAAA
CHACHA'S WINNING!
SHE'S BEATEN 30 MEN!

SHO



YOU WIN, AND YOU'LL BE THE LEADER!


ZAKI! YOU'RE THE LAST ONE!
WHAT ARE THE YOUNG FOLK DOING!?

YOU SHOULD BE OUR LEADER.
CHACHA.

YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH AMBITION, DO YOU?

JUST ONE.
THERE'S ONE THING I WANT.
NO, I DO.

TO LIVE MY LIFE WITH CHACHA!

...WHEN POWER RULES ALL.

IN THIS TERRIBLE AGE...

ON THAT DAWN WHEN YOU WERE BORN...

FP

KCHNK

...MY DESTINY WAS SET.

I SWEAR--

DMM

CHK

THAT I WILL BE YOUR SHADOW.

IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO LIVE AND SUFFER FOR...

BUT...

IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO DO...

IT MUST BE SO HARD TO STAND ON TOP...

...AS A WOMAN.

YAAAAA
I WILL BE WITH YOU...
...WHEREVER WE MAY GO.

KAP
KNN
GRR
DSH
THUD
KRSH
HFF
HFF
HFF

KRSSH
POP
KRIK
LET'S GO.
CHA-CHA.
KRK
FMMM
RMB
RMB
RRMB

GYA!

DOOM
WAAH!

HOOOSH

CHIGUSA!?

HSS

KRASH

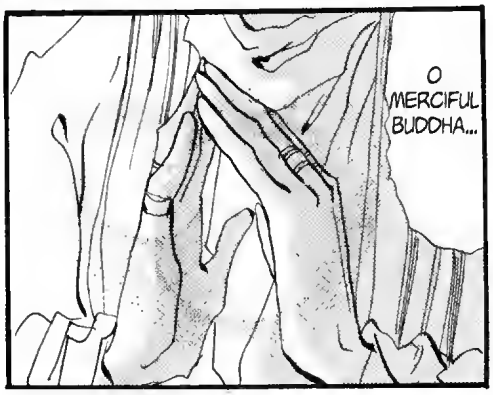
HOOSH

TATARA!

TATARA!
KRAK
TAKE HER!
KRSH
TAKE HER FOR ME!
KSHOOM

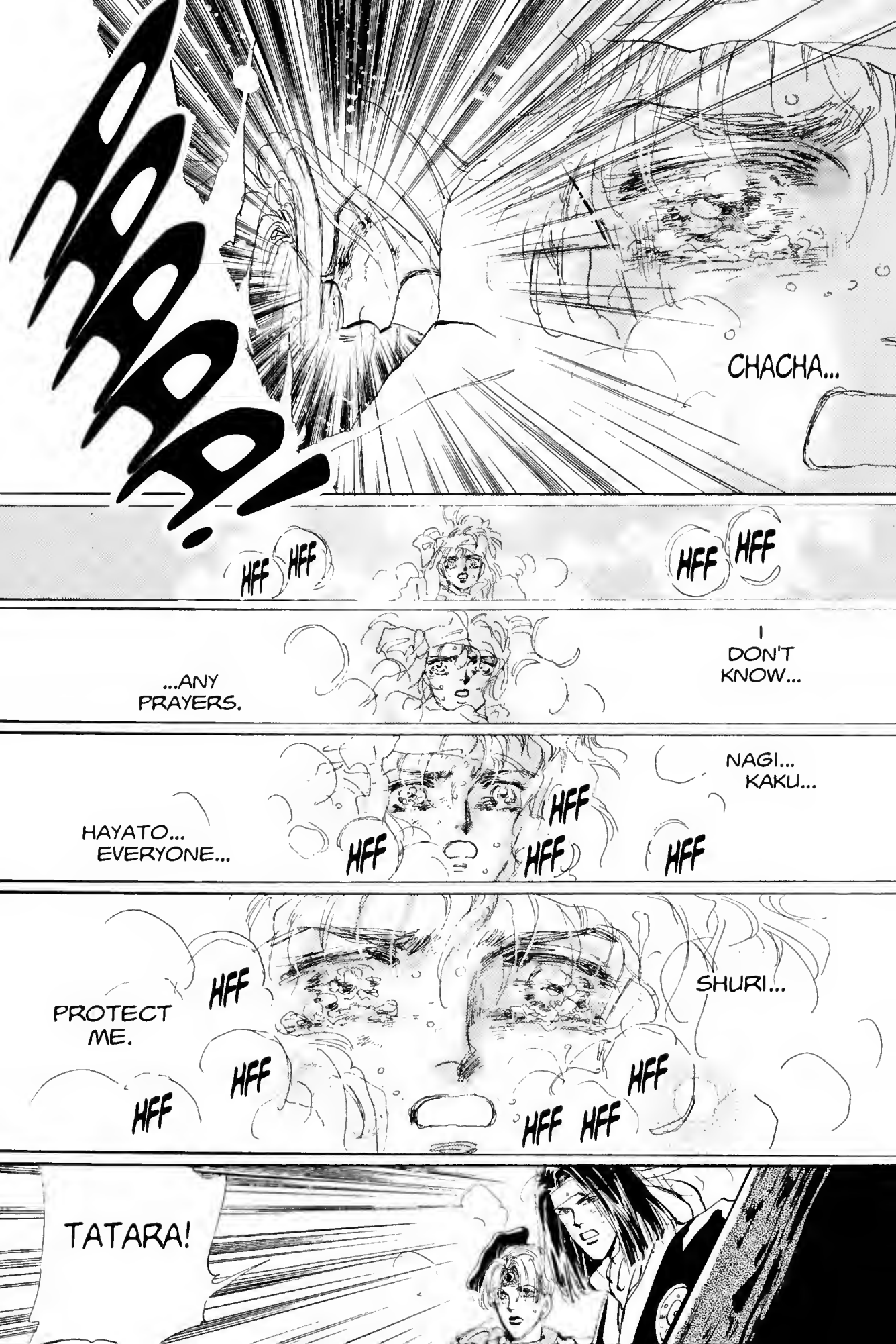
DMM
ZAKI!
NNH!

BOOM


O MERCIFUL BUDDHA...

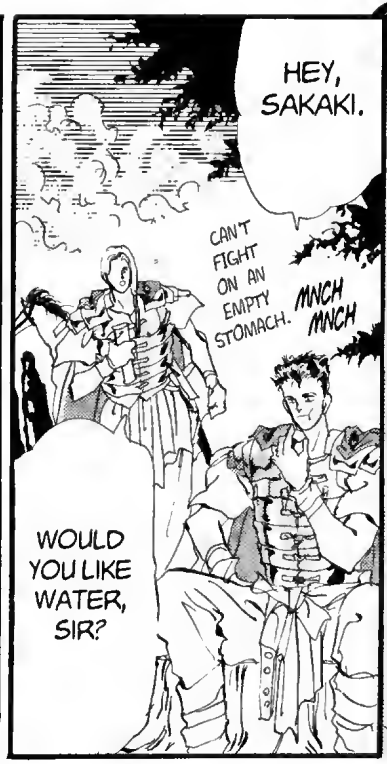
A FLAME IS GOING OUT...
THE FLAME OF SOMEONE'S LIFE...

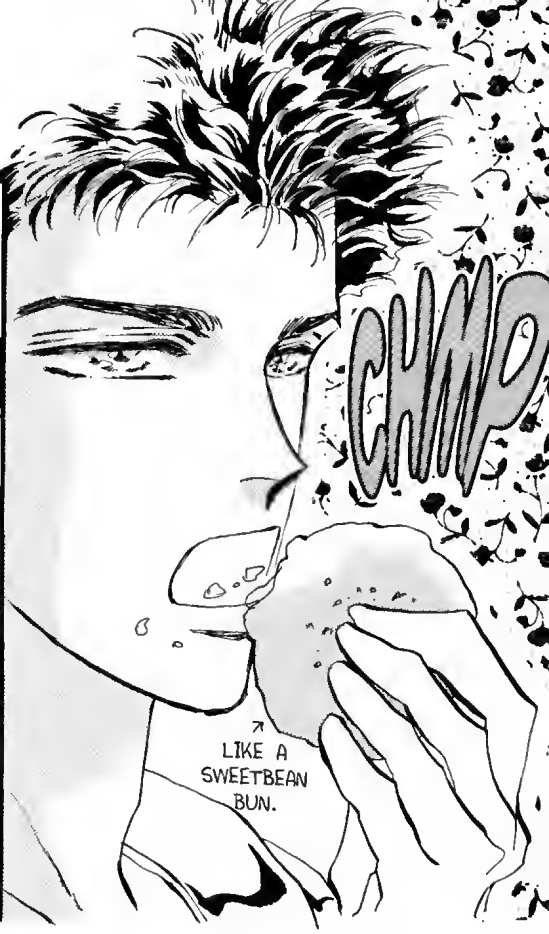
MASTER NAGI!
MASTER NAGI?
HFF
HFF
HFF
TNK TNK
ZAKI...
ZA...
KI...
NO!
NOOOO!
CHA-CHA...
HFF-HFF
NO!
NO...

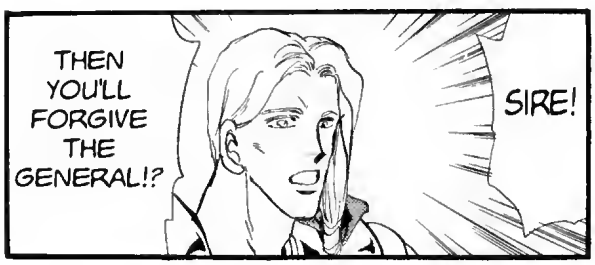

CHACHA...
HFF HFF
HFF HFF
I DON'T KNOW...
...ANY PRAYERS.
NAGI... KAKU...
HAYATO... EVERYONE...
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
SHURI...
PROTECT ME.
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
TATARA!

JUMP!
YATO!
TATARA!

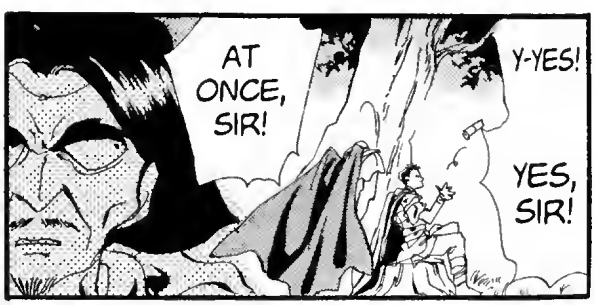
BRING KAZAN TO ME.
LICK LICK


HEY, SAKAKI.
CAN'T FIGHT ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.
MNCH MNCH
WOULD YOU LIKE WATER, SIR?


CHMP
LIKE A SWEETBEAN BUN.


THEN YOU'LL FORGIVE THE GENERAL!?
SIRE!

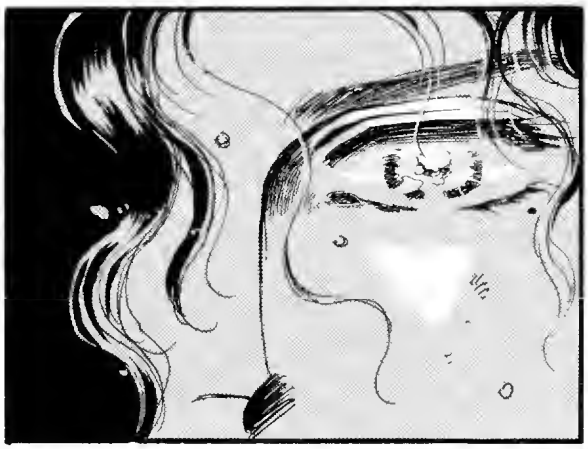
GULP
BRING HIM HERE IMME-DIATELY.
HE'S SURELY LEARNED HIS LESSON BY NOW.


AT ONCE, SIR!
Y-YES!
YES, SIR!

HE USED TATARA'S MOTHER AS BAIT...
GLUG GLUG
TO LURE HIM OUT AND FIGHT HIM.
THAT'S HOW IT SEEMS TO ME. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

DS
SH

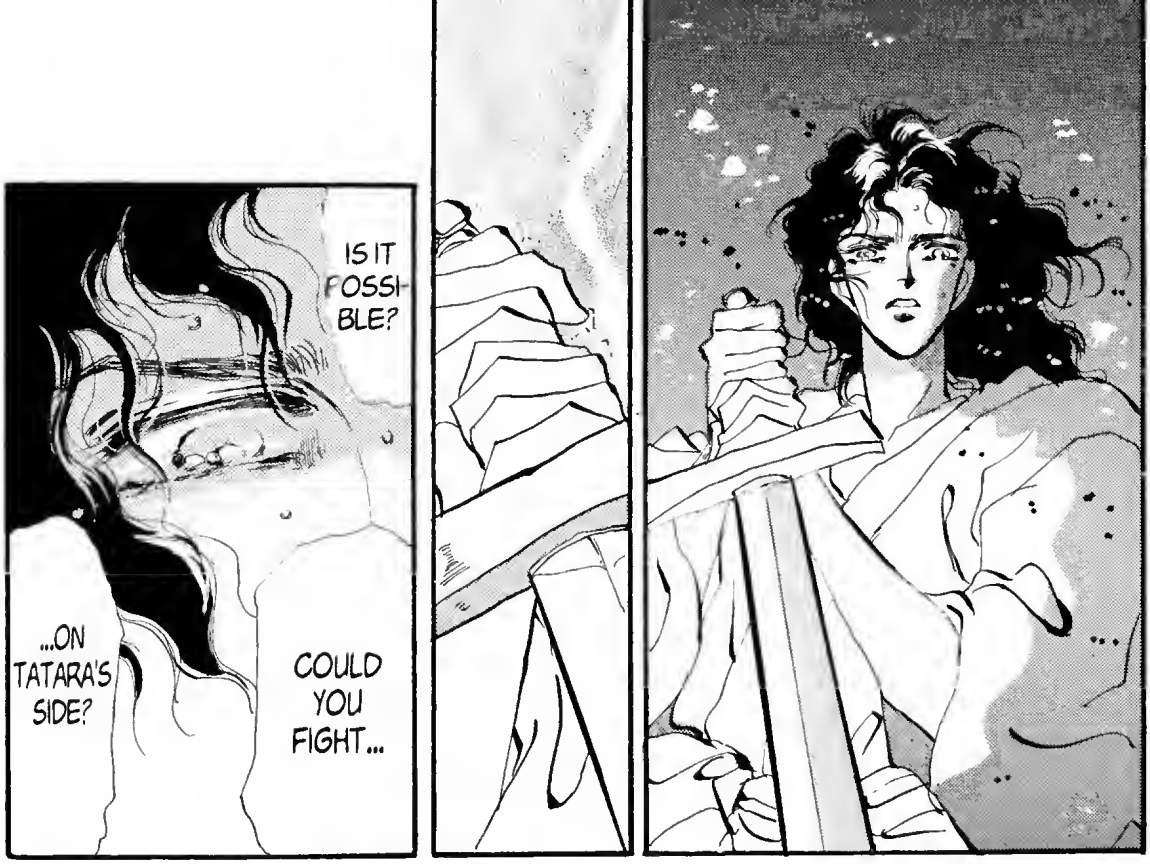
GO AHEAD.
KILL ME WITH THAT SWORD.



PLIP
PLOP
PLEASE.
END MY MISERY.
I BEG YOU.

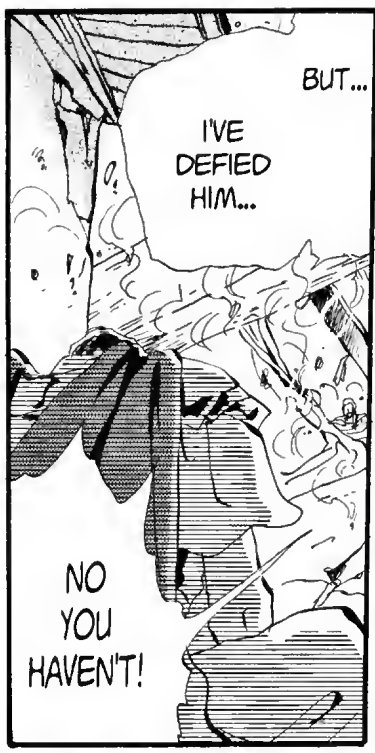
HAK

I'M AFRAID THAT...
...TATARA ESCAPED. HE'S SAFE NOW.

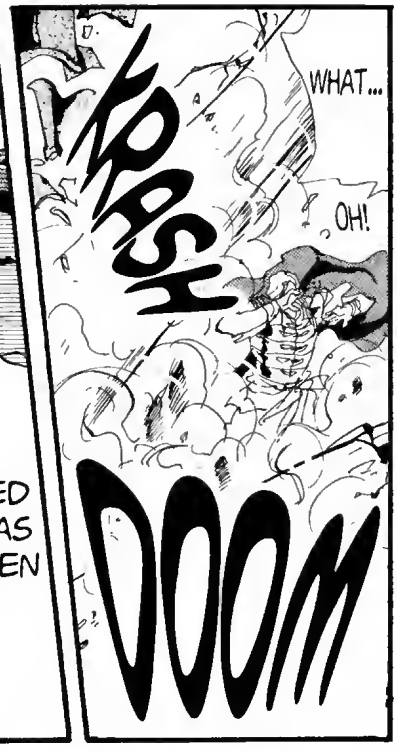

IS IT POSSIBLE?
...ON TATARA'S SIDE?
COULD YOU FIGHT...

I MAY BE AT THE END OF MY LIFE AND POWERS...
BUT I AM STILL KAZAN, GENERAL OF THE RED ARMY.
DON'T BE ABSURD.

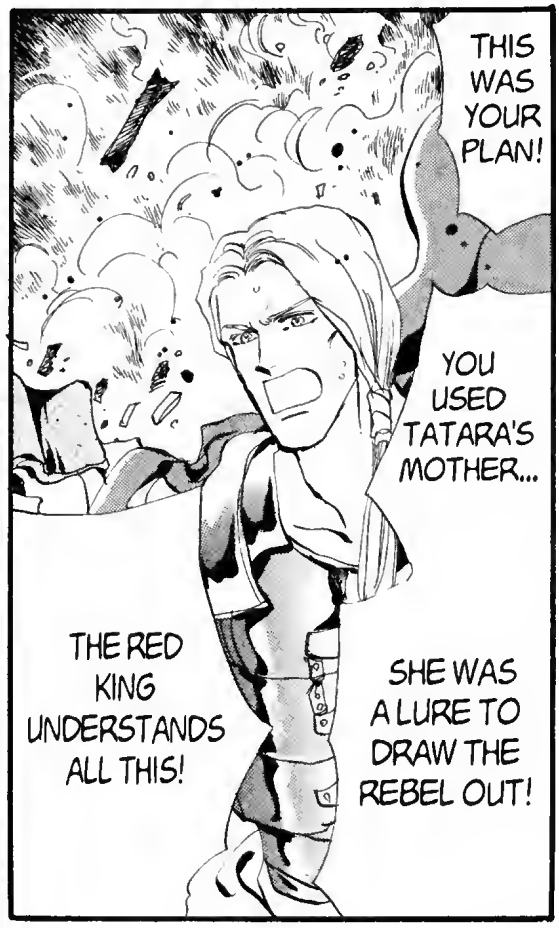
GENERAL KAZAN!
POP HSS
KRAK
GENERAL!


BUT...
I'VE DEFIED HIM...
NO YOU HAVEN'T!

SIR!
KOOOSH
KOF
THE RED KING HAS FORGIVEN YOU!
PLEASE, YOU MUST COME WITH ME!


WHAT...
OH!
KRASH
DOOM

BUT IT'S NOT TRUE!


THIS WAS YOUR PLAN!
YOU USED TATARA'S MOTHER...
THE RED KING UNDERSTANDS ALL THIS!
SHE WAS A LURE TO DRAW THE REBEL OUT!

IN DEATH, I SWEAR IT!
THAT IS THE TRUTH!
YET I LET HER STEAL MY HEART!
I KNEW SHE WAS TATARA'S MOTHER...
I DID NOT USE LADY CHIGUSA... FOR ANY PURPOSE!
I PROMISE...
I PROMISE...
SIR!
KARA KARA
DON'T YOU SEE THE KING'S GENER-OSITY!?

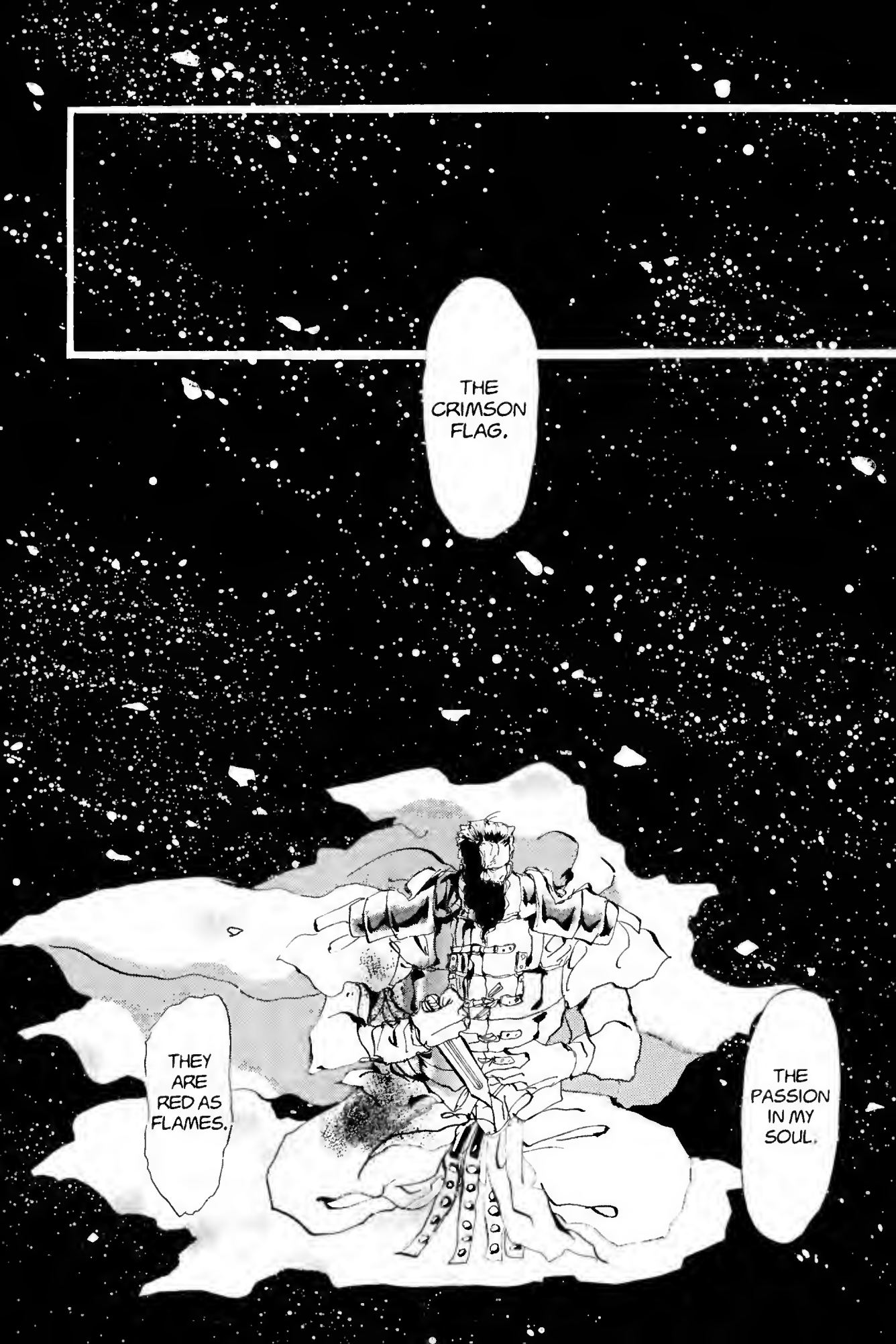
LADY CHIGUSA.
HSS
WILL YOU BE MY SECOND?

BUT I PROMISE...
LIFE WILL BE INTERESTING...
...IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME.

TUG
WHY ELSE WOULD THEY ASSIGN YOU TO ME...
...AND SEND YOU TO THIS DESERT?

KAZAN.
WHAT A BLUNDERER YOU MUST BE!

I PROMISE...
I WILL SHOW YOU THE WORLD!


THE CRIMSON FLAG.
THEY ARE RED AS FLAMES.
THE PASSION IN MY SOUL.

I SHALL RIDE WITH YOU.
IN THE FIELDS OF THE DEAD...

NNN!

I WILL SERVE THE RED KING!

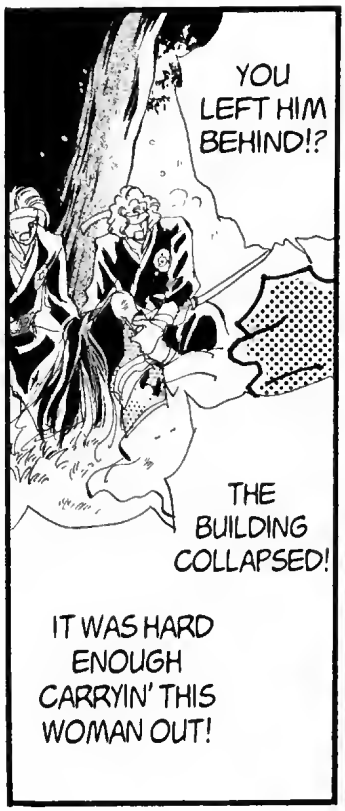
SIR!
GENERAL, DON'T!
FOR EVEN IN THE AFTER-LIFE...

LET US RIDE TO-GETHER...

LADY...
CHI... GUSA...
KRSSH
GENERAL!
GENERAL!

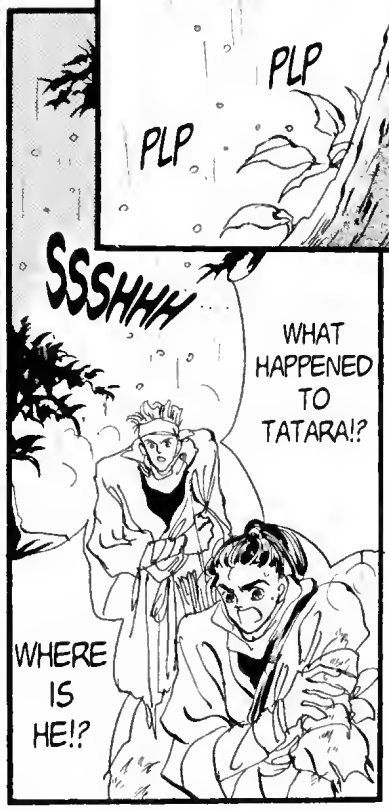
KLANG
AH!

AMITABHA...
TATHAGATA...

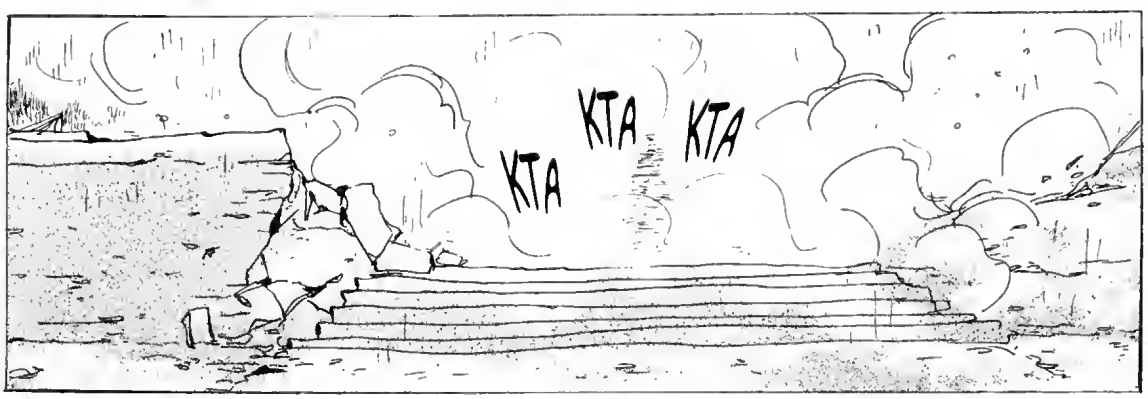

YOU LEFT HIM BEHIND!?
THE BUILDING COLLAPSED!
IT WAS HARD ENOUGH CARRYIN' THIS WOMAN OUT!

THAT... FOOL...

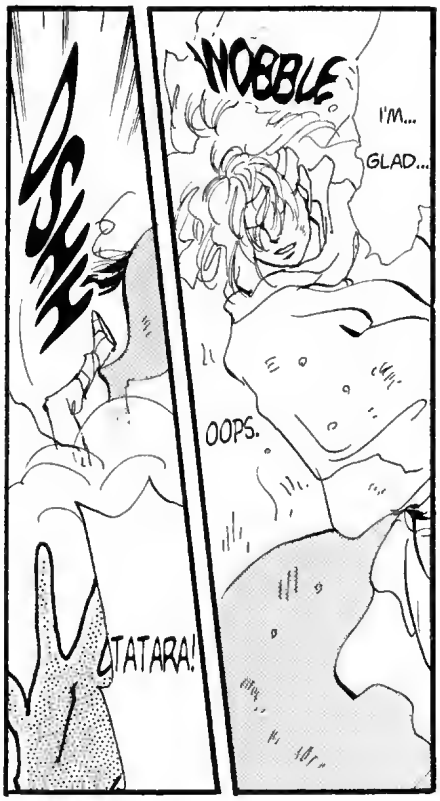
DON'T KNOW!
DO I LOOK LIKE THAT FOOL'S KEEPER T'YOU!?

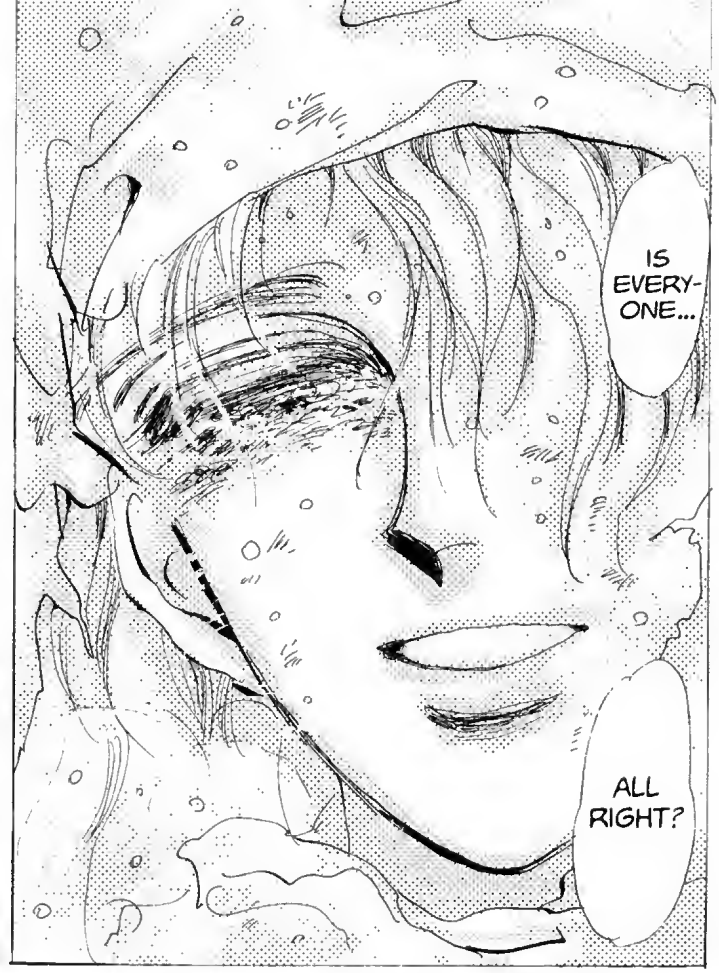

PLP
PLP
SSSHHH
WHAT HAPPENED TO TATARA!?
WHERE IS HE!?

TATARA!
IF ONLY I'D BEEN BY YOUR SIDE!
GOD! OH, GOD!

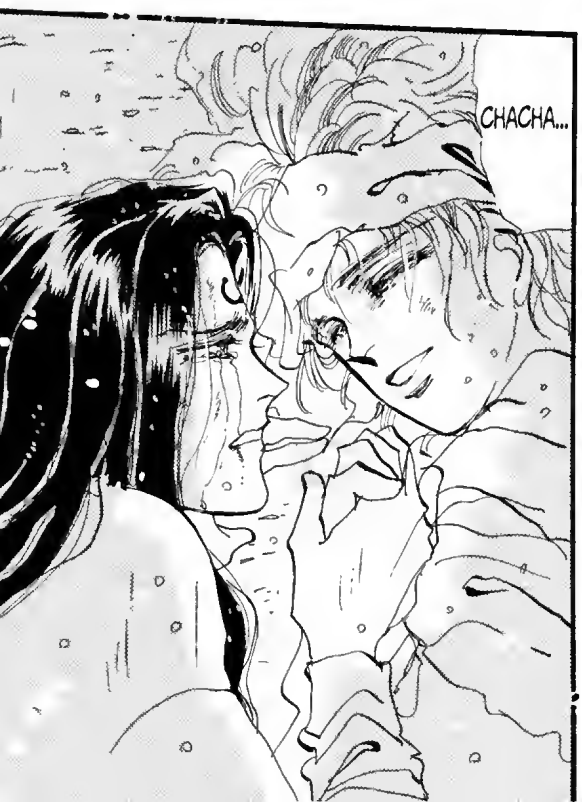

KTA
KTA
KTA

KTA
KTA
KTA
KTA

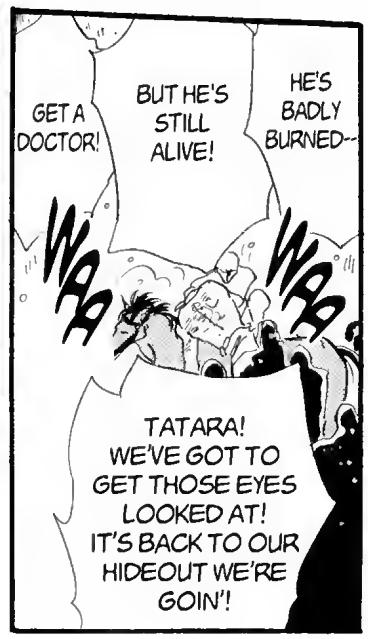

SHE
WOBBLE
I'M...
GLAD...
OOPS.
TATARA!

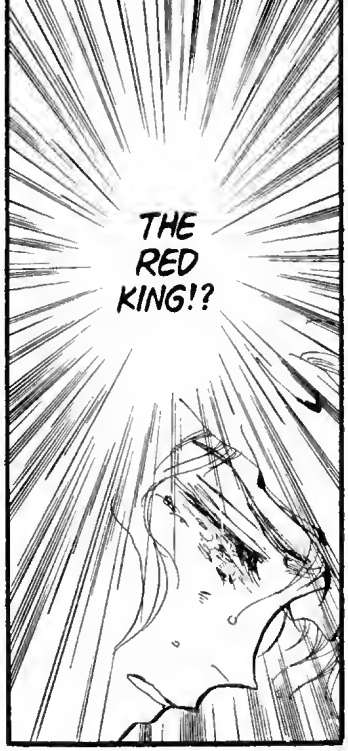

IS EVERY-ONE...
ALL RIGHT?

AND YATO, TOO...
CHECK UP ON ZAKI...
UHH!
I'M...
FINE.
SHINBASHI'S OUT COLD.
TATARA!


CHACHA...

TATARA.
TATARA...
TATARA.


GET A DOCTOR!
BUT HE'S STILL ALIVE!
HE'S BADLY BURNED--
WAA
WAA
TATARA! WE'VE GOT TO GET THOSE EYES LOOKED AT! IT'S BACK TO OUR HIDEOUT WE'RE GOIN'!

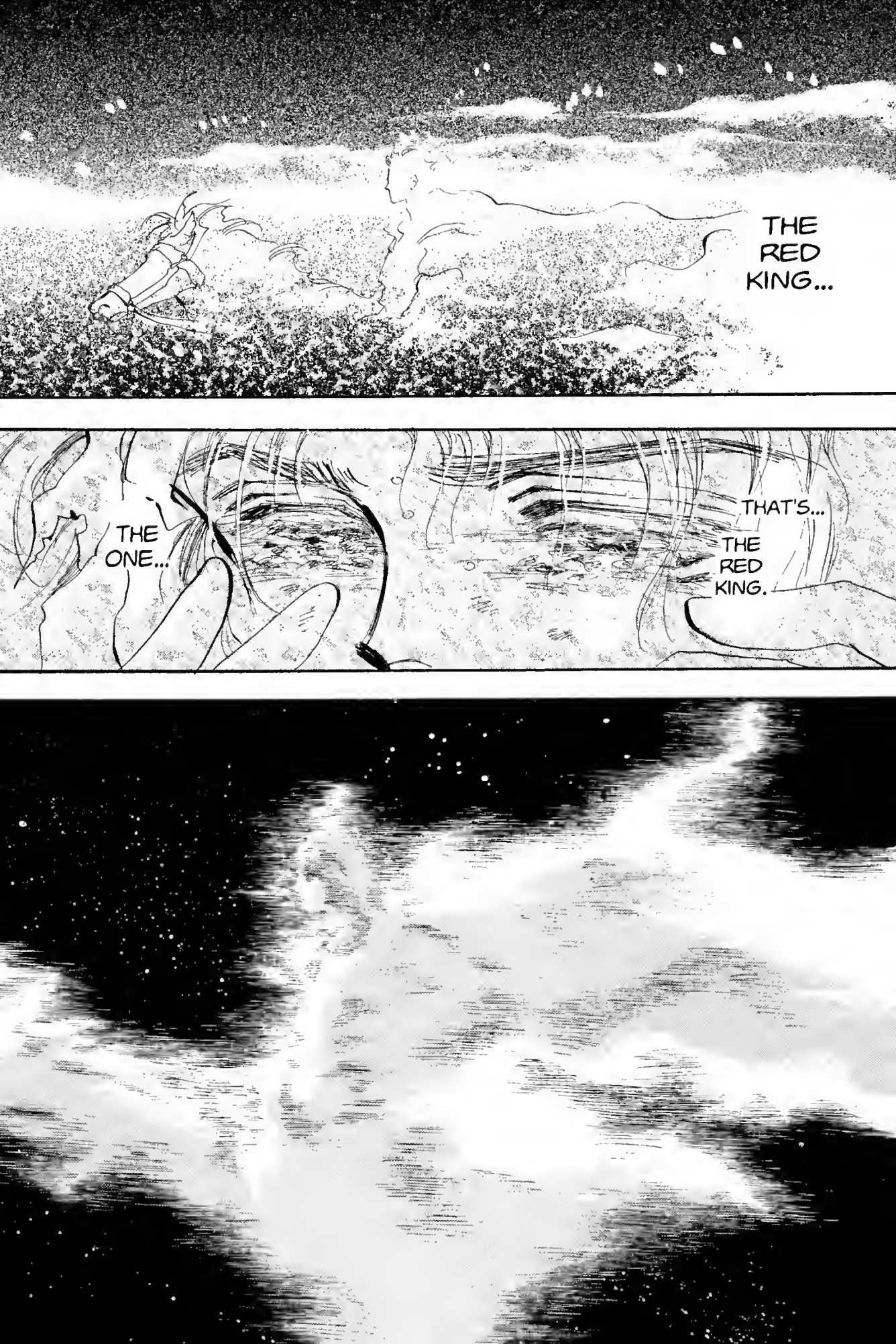

THE RED KING!?

IS THAT ONE IN THE LEAD...
KTA KTA
YEAH.
HE'S THE RED KING.

SHK SHK
GET DOWN.
DON'T! WE'RE ALL INJURED HERE.
WE SHOULD FIRE SOME ARROWS INTO 'EM.

WAIT!
IT'S THE RED ARMY!

KTA KTA KTA


THE RED KING...
THE ONE...
THAT'S...
THE RED KING.

THE RED...
I CAN'T SEE HIM.
I CAN'T SEE...
...ANYTHING.

WE ONLY HAVE ONE PAGE, BUT...

BONUS TAM-TAM TIME

I'd wanted to write about my trip to the States, but I don't have enough pages! I'm sorry. Next time!

I'm playing Final Fantasy V right now. The graphics are really pretty! I want to play more! Patience... But I also played Mario Kart, Yoshi's Cookie, and of course, Dragon Quest. It was a good year.

For those of you who are upset at the dearth of love scenes lately... (I can't help it! They just can't be together right now!) Just be patient a little while longer. I'll do a big one.

THIS IS ALL ABOUT NINTENDO GAMES.

"BASARA" is now up to 7 volumes. I'll keep doing my best, so please stay tuned! For all those taking entrance exams — good luck! And you people in the work force —hang in there!

Please write me!

Take care, everyone!

TAMU.

Recommendations

If you enjoyed *Basara*, please try these other graphic novels:

Chicago
From *Basara*'s creator, Yumi Tamura, *Chicago* is an action-packed short series set in the near future. Capable Rei and her seasoned partner Uozumi are survivors. After being deployed to a half-finished manmade island to search for earthquake victims, their military rescue squad is bombed. Discovering the mysterious forces behind the bombing becomes their personal goal as they join a private rescue force that gathers secretly in a Shinjuku bar called "Chicago."

Banana Fish
Currently running in the anthology *Animerica Extra*, Akimi Yoshida's most famous series is filled with gritty action. When a man is gunned down in the gang-infested back alleys of 1980's New York City, it begins a complicated series of events that causes gang leader Ash to go up against mafia don "Papa" Dino. The series sends Ash and his allies across the country and against political intrigues in search of the truth behind the mysterious and deadly substance "Banana Fish."

Vagabond
One of the best action artists out there, Takehiko Inoue puts his skills to the test in this extraordinary series. Inspired by Eiji Yoshikawa's classic samurai story *Musashi*, *Vagabond* is the tale of an unfocused soldier on the losing side of history. Takezo's initial goal of survival escalates the violence around him, turning him into a homicidal wildman. Through the way of the sword, he must transform himself from brute to saint.

Editor's comments

Amitabha making a personal appearance... Wow! Who's Amitabha? Commonly known as Amida in Japan, this Buddha is most easily compared to Christ. Like Christ, he saw to it that all people could achieve enlightenment through faith. He is considered the embodiment of compassion and wisdom and is one of the most commonly followed Buddha in Japan.

What were Chigusa and Kazan doing at the end? Kazan was committing *seppuku*, better known in the West by the more vulgar term "harakiri" (literally "belly-slitting"). This ritualized form of suicide involves a person disemboweling himself or herself with a short blade followed by a second person beheading them with a sword. It is an intimate ritual commonly performed in retribution for failure or loss.

Benkei Musashibo is a legendary swordsman from the twelfth century. A wild child untamed by early entrance into a monastery, he became a rogue intent on killing 1000 samurai and taking their swords. After 999, the impossibly agile Yoshitsune, who'd been trained by tengu, defeated him. Benkei became Yoshitsune's follower and died heroically taking countless arrows to protect him.

Tengu are magical beings typically depicted as Nachi described--with a red face and a long nose--though they can bear a crow's beak and wings. Fierce warriors, tengu like tricking humans and can bring divine luck. The kanji for "tengu" are "heaven" and "dog." This is why the Tengu Faction's flags bear the kanji for "heaven."

Why did Nachi keep going "okay" with his hand? Notice he uses it in connection with financial concerns. That gesture actually means *money* in Japan, with the round shape indicating coins.

What was that coil thing Nachi used in the woods? Still in use today, *katori senko* are burned like incense, but their sent is not for ritual or pleasure. Instead, it drives away mosquitoes!

Why does Tamura use a blade to make comics? Screen tone, used for shading in comics, is usually cut out of sheets with an artist's blade. Blades are also used to scratch the tone to achieve various effects and to sharpen pencils and the like. —PD